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ELEPHANTMEN!™

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2260 BOOK THREE

"LEARNING TO BE HUMAN"

CHURCHLAND · ZARCONE · PEDRO · GUERRA · COOK · ROSHELL

Image Comics presents:

ELEPHANTMEN

RICHARD STARKINGS • AXEL MEDELLIN • MARK SCHWEIKERT

2260

LEARNING TO BE HUMAN

SHAKY KANE • GABO • MARIAN CHURCHLAND • MARLEY ZARCONE
CARLOS PEDRO • FRANK QUITELY • BOO COOK • PIA GUERRA • JOHN ROSHELL

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1
FRANK QUITELY

Image Comics Proudly Presents:

Blue Collar Blues

Story & Letters by Richard Starkings

Framing Sequence by Axel Medellin

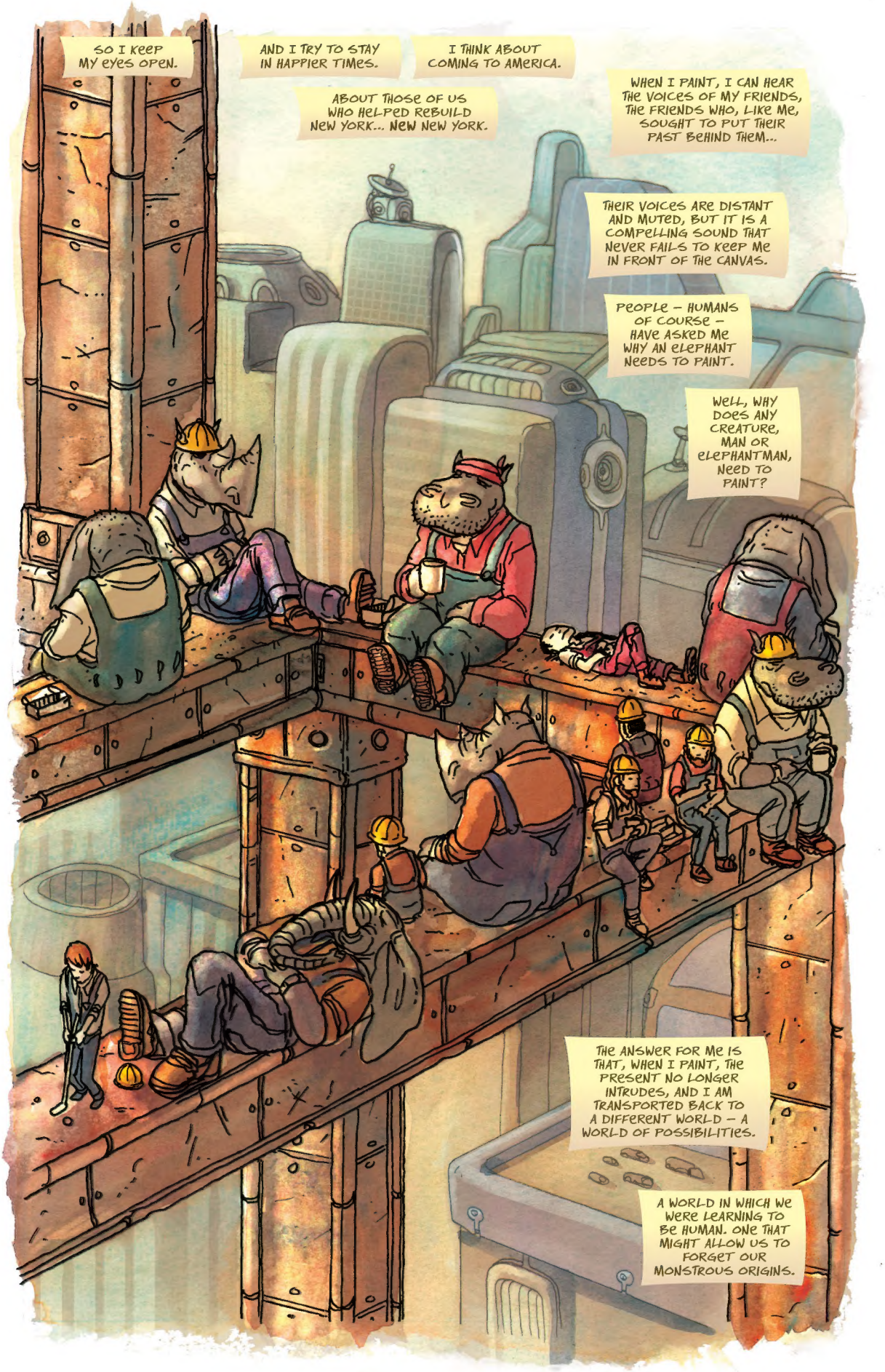
Watercolours by Gabriel Bautista

HIROMI KIYOKO -- MIKI -- LEARNED LONG AGO THAT PAIN WAS SO VERY CLOSE TO PLEASURE...
WHEN SHE WAS SUFFERING OVER SOME BOY OR OTHER IN HER TEENAGE YEARS, HER MOTHER WAS FOND OF TELLING HER THE STORY OF THE HONEYMOON BRIDE...
THE BRIDE'S ONLY MISTAKE WAS TO FOLLOW THE MAN SHE LOVED INTO THE WATERS OF THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON RIVER...
TREACHEROUS WATERS...
THERE, AS THE COUPLE SWAM AND FROLICKED HAPPILY IN THE RIVER, A GIANT STINGRAY IMPALED THE BRIDE... DRAGGING HER DOWN INTO THE DEPTHS, NEVER TO SEE THE MAN SHE LOVED EVER AGAIN.
MIKI'S NOT USED TO FEELING PAIN LIKE THIS... SHE'S USUALLY THE HEARTBREAKER, BUT HER FEELINGS FOR HIP HAVE PULLED HER FURTHER DOWN THAN SHE'S EVER BEEN BEFORE...
AND IT'S HER OWN FAULT.

SHE DIDN'T THINK SHE COULD WAIT FOR HIM...
WAIT FOR HIM WHILE HE WAS ON THE TRAIL OF A MURDERER...
WAIT FOR HIM WHILE HE WAS ON THE MOON...
WAIT FOR HIM TO WAKE UP!
WHY DIDN'T YOU WAIT, MIKI?
IT'S EASY FOR YOU, HIP... DANGER IS YOUR MIDDLE NAME...
ALWAYS OUT THERE SAVING YOUR FRIENDS, SAVING THE WORLD...
WHO'S GOING TO SAVE ME?
NOT HER OTHER FELLA APPARENTLY, NOT "APOSTROPHE" ...
I'M SORRY, MIKI, I CAN'T TALK TO YOU -- I CAN'T SEE YOU ANY MORE...
I CAN'T EXPLAIN... IT'S... THERE'S BEEN, Ah, A DEATH IN THE FAMILY...*
ARE YOU HUNGRY, MIKI? I COULD MAKE PIZZA!
Oh!
BACK RUB? I CAN RUN MY SHIATSU APP!
Oh, NO, WAGNER, I'M FINE.
Um--
HOW ABOUT A GAME? TIC-TAC-TOE? HANGMAN! LEAPFROG!
OR WE COULD TRY TO GUESS WHAT'S IN THE PACKAGES THAT WERE JUST DELIVERED!
OOH-- PACKAGES! I LOVE ME SOME PACKAGES. MAKES ME FEEL LIKE IT'S CHRISTMAS!

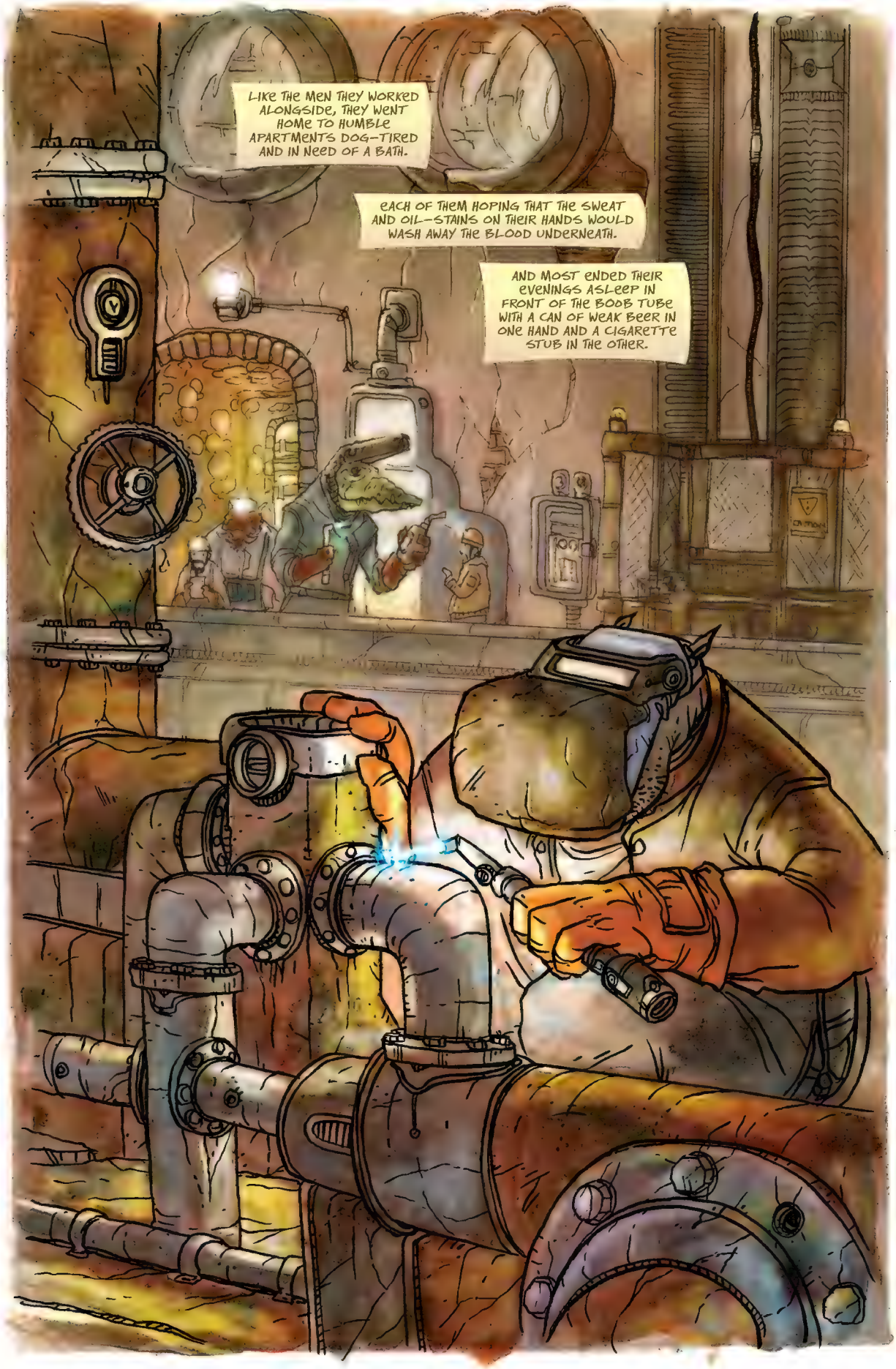
*See ELEPHANTMEN #49

WE SHOULD PROBABLY OPEN THEM, DON'TCHA THINK? JUST IN CASE THERE'S SOMETHING HIP NEEDS TO SEE URGENTLY!
WELL, UH...
GOOD CALL!
Oh.
PAINTINGS? HAS HIP BEEN SEEING ANOTHER, Uh, PAINTER?
THERE'S A MESSAGE HERE...
HIP
LET'S HEAR IT, WAGNER. JUST IN CASE, YOU KNOW, IT'S URGENT.
LOADING...
GOT IT...
WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES, I'M TAKEN BACK...
BACK TO THE BOMBING AND THE GUNFIRE.
BACK TO THE BLOOD AND THE BURNING BODIES...
BACK TO THE WAR.


SO I KEEP MY EYES OPEN.
AND I TRY TO STAY IN HAPPIER TIMES.
I THINK ABOUT COMING TO AMERICA.
ABOUT THOSE OF US WHO HELPED REBUILD NEW YORK... NEW NEW YORK.
WHEN I PAINT, I CAN HEAR THE VOICES OF MY FRIENDS, THE FRIENDS WHO, LIKE ME, SOUGHT TO PUT THEIR PAST BEHIND THEM...
THEIR VOICES ARE DISTANT AND MUTED, BUT IT IS A COMPELLING SOUND THAT NEVER FAILS TO KEEP ME IN FRONT OF THE CANVAS.
PEOPLE – HUMANS OF COURSE – HAVE ASKED ME WHY AN ELEPHANT NEEDS TO PAINT.
WELL, WHY DOES ANY CREATURE, MAN OR ELEPHANTMAN, NEED TO PAINT?
THE ANSWER FOR ME IS THAT, WHEN I PAINT, THE PRESENT NO LONGER INTRUDES, AND I AM TRANSPORTED BACK TO A DIFFERENT WORLD – A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES.
A WORLD IN WHICH WE WERE LEARNING TO BE HUMAN. ONE THAT MIGHT ALLOW US TO FORGET OUR MONSTROUS ORIGINS.

WHEN WE FIRST ARRIVED IN AMERICA – BEFORE WE WERE SCATTERED AMONGST REGULAR AMERICAN JOES AND PUT TO WORK – I SAW A LITTLE BOY AT THE SIDE OF THE STREET, SMILING BROADLY AT US DESPITE HIS MOTHER'S GRIM AND DISAPPROVING GAZE.
"LOOK AT ALL THE CIRCUS ANIMALS, MOM," HE SAID, "WHAT A PARADE! IT LOOKS LIKE IT GOES ON FOREVER!"
IT FELT LIKE IT DID. THERE WERE SO MANY OF US, WEREN'T THERE? HOW MANY ELEPHANTMEN SURVIVED?
A THOUSAND? TEN THOUSAND? A HUNDRED THOUSAND?
WHERE ARE THEY ALL NOW?
HOW MANY WERE SHIPPED TO AMERICA?
HOW MANY DID I PAINT?
FS

WHEN I PAINT THEM, THEY'RE NOT THE "ELEPHANTMEN" HUMANS TALK ABOUT IN HUSHED TONES BEHIND OUR BACKS. THEY'RE JUST A BUNCH OF GUYS GOING ABOUT THEIR DAILY LIVES.
寿司
BLUE COLLAR WORKERS.
ARTISANS. IS THAT THE RIGHT WORD?
DIGGING HOLES IN THE ROAD AND TAKING AWAY THE TRASH.
WASTE


LIKE THE MEN THEY WORKED ALONGSIDE, THEY WENT HOME TO HUMBLE APARTMENTS DOG-TIRED AND IN NEED OF A BATH.
EACH OF THEM HOPING THAT THE SWEAT AND OIL-STAINS ON THEIR HANDS WOULD WASH AWAY THE BLOOD UNDERNEATH.
AND MOST ENDED THEIR EVENINGS ASLEEP IN FRONT OF THE BOOB TUBE WITH A CAN OF WEAK BEER IN ONE HAND AND A CIGARETTE STUB IN THE OTHER.

OF COURSE, WE WERE LIVING IN A WORLD MADE FOR MEN, NOT ELEPHANTMEN... MOST OF US EIGHT FOOT TALL VEGETARIANS...
BUT, AS THEY MADE CONCESSIONS FOR US... BIGGER DOORWAYS, CUSTOM MADE TOILETS, BIGGER SPOONS...
SO WE ADAPTED TO HUMAN HABITS AND APPETITES...
WHEN YOU'RE LIVING IN GOVERNMENT-APPROVED HOUSING AND GIVEN EIGHT HUNDRED CREDITS TO GET BY ON EVERY TWO WEEKS, WHAT ELSE ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
OUT
VFONE
IF HALF OF THAT GOES TO YOUR RENT, AND THE REST HAS TO COVER FOOD, SERVICES AND ENTERTAINMENT, YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO ADAPT, RIGHT?
FALL BEHIND AND YOU'RE GONNA BE REALLY STUCK.
SO YOU'RE GOING TO EAT YOUR FILL OF FATTY RIBS, UNDERDONE POTATOES AND WATERY CABBAGE.
AND IF THEY GAVE YOU A JOB WORKING AS A SHORT ORDER CHEF IN A DINER, AND THEY ASK YOU TO COOK BACONBURGERS, YOU'RE GONNA DO IT, AND YOU'RE NOT GONNA MIND THE SMELL.

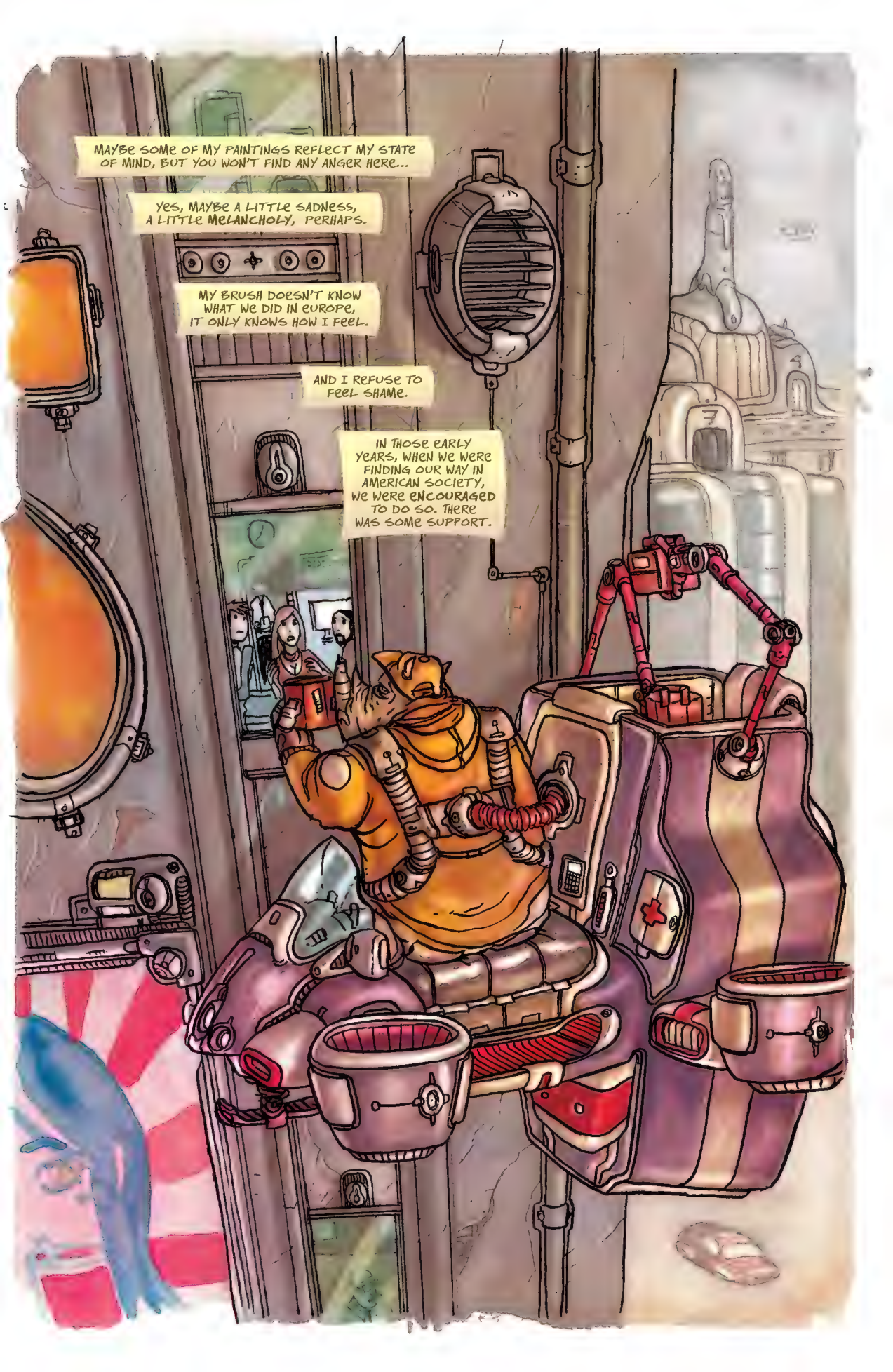
WE HAD NOTHING, AND WE WANTED MORE.
IN THAT SENSE, WE WERE VERY HUMAN.
JUST LIKE A MILLION MILLION HUMANS BEFORE US, WE SIMPLY WANTED TO ENJOY OUR LIVES.
GENETICALLY, ELEPHANTMEN AND HUMAN BEINGS ARE MADE UP OF 99% OF THE SAME GENETIC MATERIAL.
UNION STATION

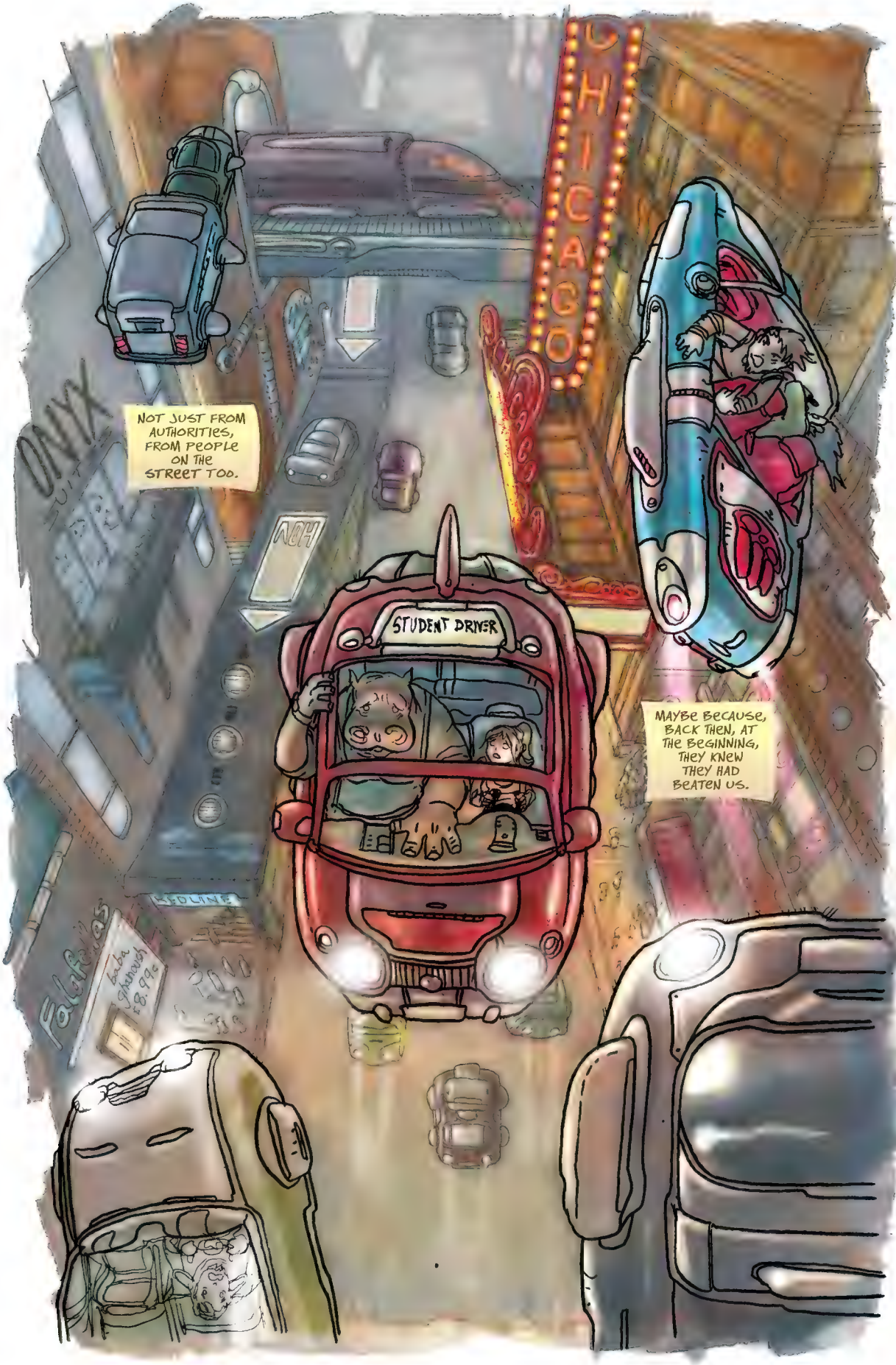
I'VE TALKED TO A LOT OF THE GUYS I'VE PAINTED... THEY HAVE BIG HEARTS.
HARD WORKERS, HAPPY TO PUT THEIR STRENGTH TO GOOD USE.
JUST BECAUSE WE WERE GENETICALLY DESIGNED TO FIGHT A WAR DOESN'T MEAN WE DON'T HAVE FEELINGS OR ASPIRATIONS OF OUR OWN, RIGHT?

WELL, MAYBE NOT THE CROCS, WITH THEIR REPTILE BRAINS AND INSATIABLE APPETITES.
WHO THE HELL KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE THINKING...?
YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT, RIGHT?
UNLIKE THE REST OF US, THEY HAD MORE OF A TASTE FOR MEAT AT A GENETIC LEVEL LONG BEFORE IT WAS FORCED ON US BY MAPPO.

SO WE CAN LAUGH, WE CAN CRY,
WE CAN ENJOY OUR WORK,
AND WE CAN PAINT, PLAY MUSIC.
BUT FOR THE MOST PART, WHEN WE WERE AMONGST HUMANS, WE BURIED OUR FEELINGS, BIT OUR TONGUES. SANG OUR SONGS WHEN WE WERE ALONE.
MAYBE IT WAS BETTER THAT WAY. IF WE'D SUNG A LITTLE LOUDER SOME ENTERPRISING TALENT SCOUT MIGHT HAVE PUT A BAND TOGETHER AND HAD US PERFORM LIKE A BUNCH OF MONKEYS.
IMAGINE THAT.

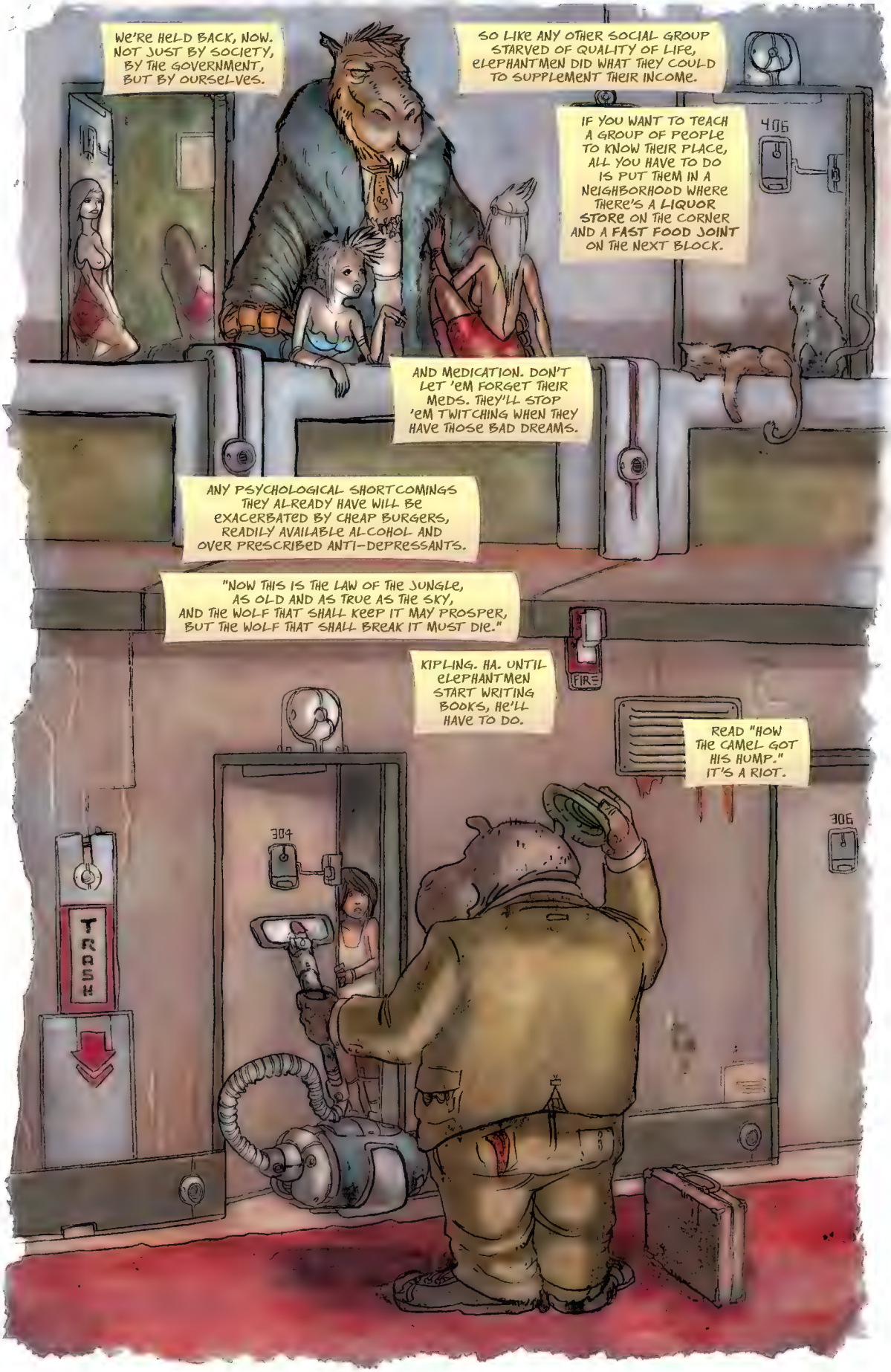
WOMEN WERE ALWAYS A BIT FRIGHTENED OF US, WEREN'T THEY? I GUESS THEY STILL ARE.
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'RE THINKING, DON'TCHA? "HOW BIG IS IT?"
OR "HOW WOULD WE GET IT ON?"
FIGURING OUT THE MECHANICS OF ANY SORT OF SEXUAL INTERACTION MAYBE GIVES THEM A THRILL OF FEAR OR ANTICIPATION.
SOME OF THE MEN FEEL THREATENED BY THAT TOO.
NOT ALL OF THEM. SOME OF THEM ARE CONSIDERING THE SAME THINGS THE WOMEN ARE THINKING, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
THAT REVEREND ON TV – FALBERTSON – WANTS YOU TO BELIEVE IT'S EQUIVALENT TO HAVING SEX WITH YOUR DOG.
AS IF THAT NEVER HAPPENS EITHER.
LUCKY Phở
SUS
SNIFF SNIFF
SNORT

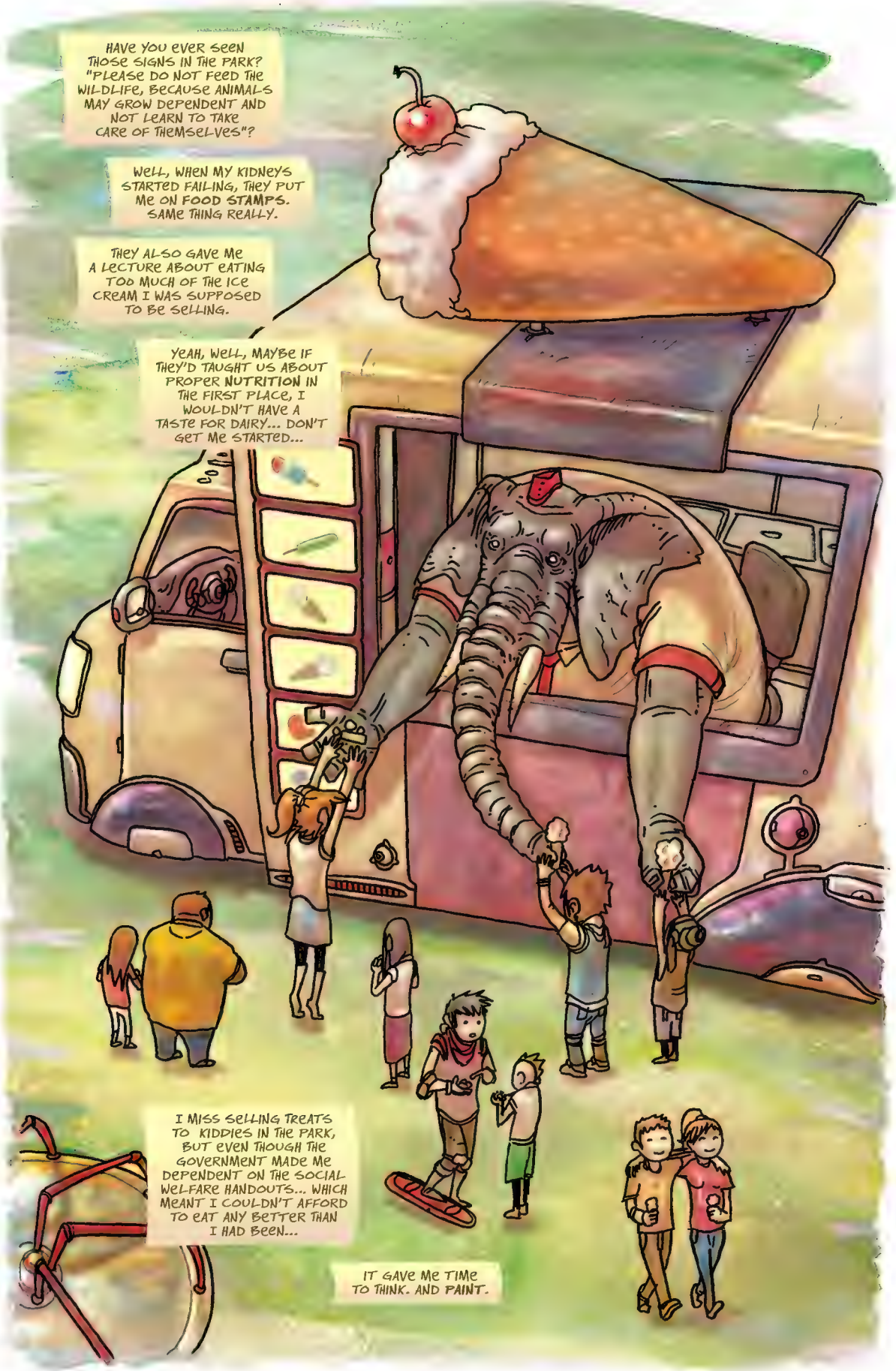

MAYBE SOME OF MY PAINTINGS REFLECT MY STATE OF MIND, BUT YOU WON'T FIND ANY ANGER HERE...
YES, MAYBE A LITTLE SADNESS, A LITTLE MELANCHOLY, PERHAPS.
MY BRUSH DOESN'T KNOW WHAT WE DID IN EUROPE, IT ONLY KNOWS HOW I FEEL.
AND I REFUSE TO FEEL SHAME.
IN THOSE EARLY YEARS, WHEN WE WERE FINDING OUR WAY IN AMERICAN SOCIETY, WE WERE ENCOURAGED TO DO SO. THERE WAS SOME SUPPORT.


CHICAGO
NOT JUST FROM AUTHORITIES, FROM PEOPLE ON THE STREET TOO.
STUDENT DRIVER
MAYBE BECAUSE, BACK THEN, AT THE BEGINNING, THEY KNEW THEY HAD BEATEN US.

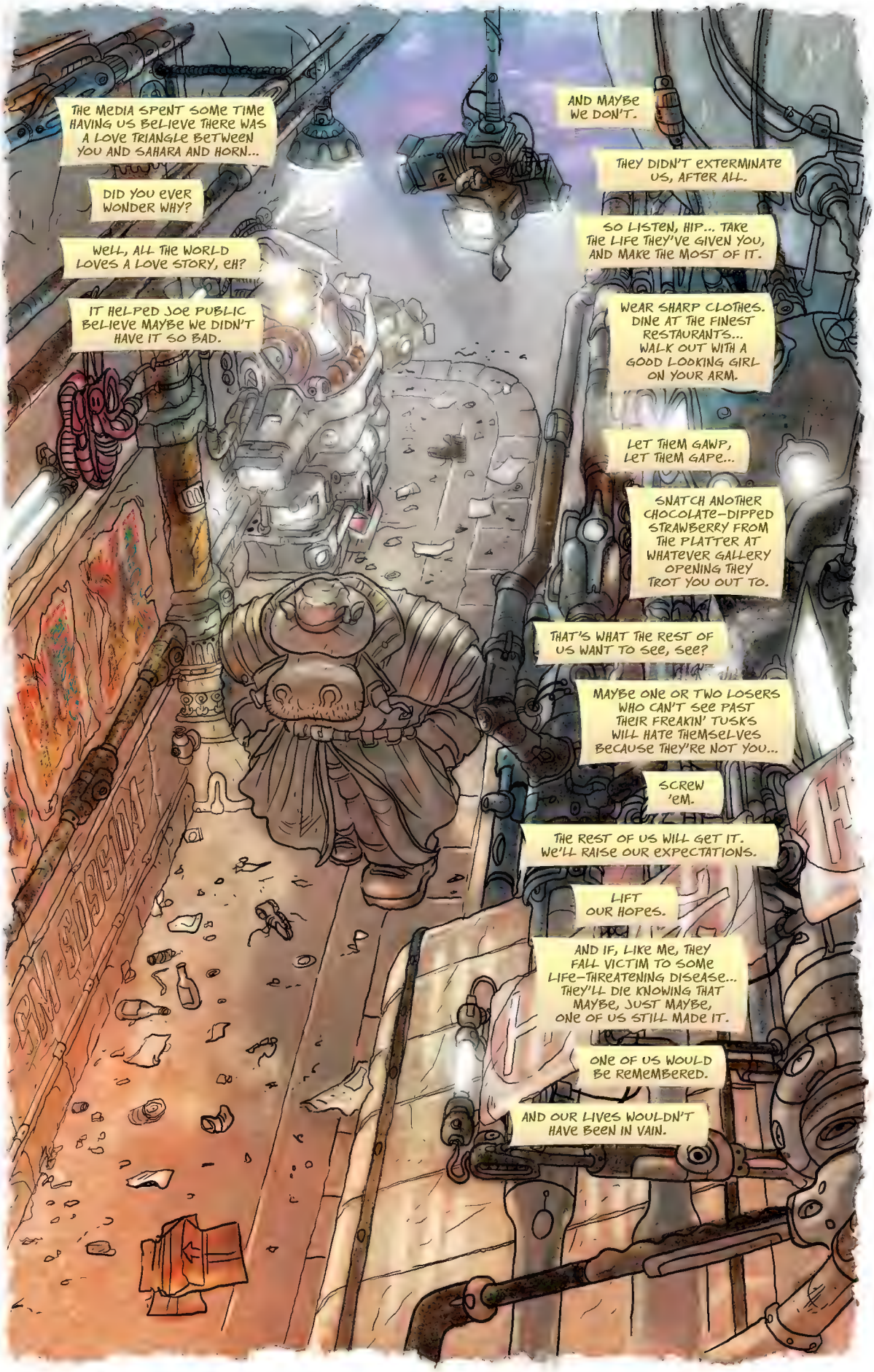
MAYBE WHEN YOU FEEL SUPERIOR, YOU DON'T FEEL SO SCARED.
THE BUDDHISTS CALL THAT ANIMALITY. HEH.

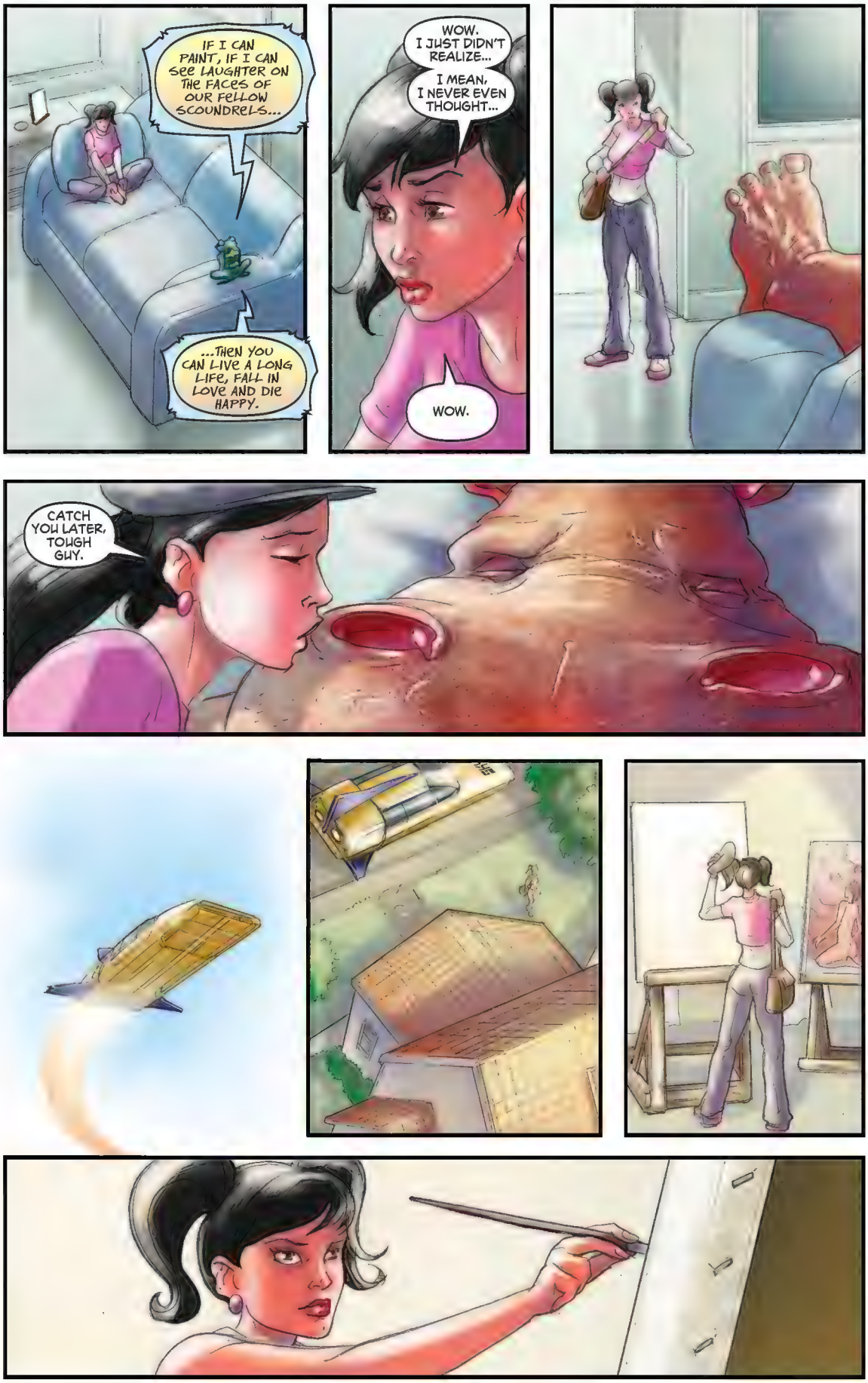
I GUESS IT'S EASIER TO HOLD OUT A HAND TO SOME POOR CREATURE FALLEN BY THE WAYSIDE THAN IT IS TO FIND YOURSELF STANDING BEHIND HIM IN THE LINE FOR A SOCIAL SECURITY CHECK.
SO WHEN WE HAD JOBS, AND GOT GOOD AT THEM, CHARITY STAYED AT HOME.
YOU'D BE ALL RIGHT IF YOU MINDED YOUR MANNERS, REMEMBERED WHO WAS BOSS AND WHO WAS NOT.
ONYX
HOTEL
CONCIERGE
JOSHUA


WE'RE HELD BACK, NOW. NOT JUST BY SOCIETY, BY THE GOVERNMENT, BUT BY OURSELVES.
SO LIKE ANY OTHER SOCIAL GROUP STARVED OF QUALITY OF LIFE, ELEPHANTMEN DID WHAT THEY COULD TO SUPPLEMENT THEIR INCOME.
IF YOU WANT TO TEACH A GROUP OF PEOPLE TO KNOW THEIR PLACE, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS PUT THEM IN A NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE THERE'S A LIQUOR STORE ON THE CORNER AND A FAST FOOD JOINT ON THE NEXT BLOCK.
406
AND MEDICATION. DON'T LET 'EM FORGET THEIR MEDS. THEY'LL STOP 'EM TWITCHING WHEN THEY HAVE THOSE BAD DREAMS.
ANY PSYCHOLOGICAL SHORTCOMINGS THEY ALREADY HAVE WILL BE EXACERBATED BY CHEAP BURGERS, READILY AVAILABLE ALCOHOL AND OVER PRESCRIBED ANTI-DEPRESSANTS.
"NOW THIS IS THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE, AS OLD AND AS TRUE AS THE SKY, AND THE WOLF THAT SHALL KEEP IT MAY PROSPER, BUT THE WOLF THAT SHALL BREAK IT MUST DIE."
KIPLING. HA. UNTIL ELEPHANTMEN START WRITING BOOKS, HE'LL HAVE TO DO.
FIR
READ "HOW THE CAMEL GOT HIS HUMP." IT'S A RIOT.
304
306
TRASH


HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THOSE SIGNS IN THE PARK? "PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE WILDLIFE, BECAUSE ANIMALS MAY GROW DEPENDENT AND NOT LEARN TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES"?
WELL, WHEN MY KIDNEYS STARTED FAILING, THEY PUT ME ON FOOD STAMPS. SAME THING REALLY.
THEY ALSO GAVE ME A LECTURE ABOUT EATING TOO MUCH OF THE ICE CREAM I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SELLING.
YEAH, WELL, MAYBE IF THEY'D TAUGHT US ABOUT PROPER NUTRITION IN THE FIRST PLACE, I WOULDN'T HAVE A TASTE FOR DAIRY... DON'T GET ME STARTED...
I MISS SELLING TREATS TO KIDDIES IN THE PARK, BUT EVEN THOUGH THE GOVERNMENT MADE ME DEPENDENT ON THE SOCIAL WELFARE HANDOUTS... WHICH MEANT I COULDN'T AFFORD TO EAT ANY BETTER THAN I HAD BEEN...
IT GAVE ME TIME TO THINK. AND PAINT.

HIP, I KNOW YOU'VE LIVED A BIG LIFE... AND I KNOW THEY CHOSE YOU TO LIVE THAT LIFE, BECAUSE YOU WERE THE FIRSTBORN OF ALL THE TRANSGENICS... THE FIRST OF OUR KIND.
SO THEY SENT YOU TO MARS, ASSIGNED YOU AND EBONY TO THE INFORMATION AGENCY.
SEXY WHITE COLLAR WORK... THAT WAY THEY PROPELLED YOU, AND OBADIAH HORN TO A KIND OF CELEBRITY STATUS.
35
THEY PUT SOME OF US IN THE MAJOR LEAGUES FOR THE SAME REASON – AFTER ALL, WHY WOULD A MINORITY BE IN THE MAJORS?
FUNNY, I REMEMBER ONE OF THOSE GUYS KICKING SOME POOR FRENCHMAN'S HEAD DOWN THE STREET DURING THE WAR – LOOK AT 'EM NOW, EH?
RASUL
27
8


THE MEDIA SPENT SOME TIME HAVING US BELIEVE THERE WAS A LOVE TRIANGLE BETWEEN YOU AND SAHARA AND HORN...
DID YOU EVER WONDER WHY?
WELL, ALL THE WORLD LOVES A LOVE STORY, EH?
IT HELPED JOE PUBLIC BELIEVE MAYBE WE DIDN'T HAVE IT SO BAD.
AND MAYBE WE DON'T.
THEY DIDN'T EXTERMINATE US, AFTER ALL.
SO LISTEN, HIP... TAKE THE LIFE THEY'VE GIVEN YOU, AND MAKE THE MOST OF IT.
WEAR SHARP CLOTHES. DINE AT THE FINEST RESTAURANTS... WALK OUT WITH A GOOD LOOKING GIRL ON YOUR ARM.
LET THEM GAWP, LET THEM GAPE...
SNATCH ANOTHER CHOCOLATE-DIPPED STRAWBERRY FROM THE PLATTER AT WHATEVER GALLERY OPENING THEY TROT YOU OUT TO.
THAT'S WHAT THE REST OF US WANT TO SEE, SEE?
MAYBE ONE OR TWO LOSERS WHO CAN'T SEE PAST THEIR FREAKIN' TUSKS WILL HATE THEMSELVES BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT YOU...
SCREW 'EM.
THE REST OF US WILL GET IT. WE'LL RAISE OUR EXPECTATIONS.
LIFT OUR HOPES.
AND IF, LIKE ME, THEY FALL VICTIM TO SOME LIFE-THREATENING DISEASE... THEY'LL DIE KNOWING THAT MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, ONE OF US STILL MADE IT.
ONE OF US WOULD BE REMEMBERED.
AND OUR LIVES WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN IN VAIN.


IF I CAN PAINT, IF I CAN SEE LAUGHTER ON THE FACES OF OUR FELLOW SCOUNDRELS...
...THEN YOU CAN LIVE A LONG LIFE, FALL IN LOVE AND DIE HAPPY.
WOW. I JUST DIDN'T REALIZE...
I MEAN, I NEVER EVEN THOUGHT...
WOW.
CATCH YOU LATER, TOUGH GUY.

2

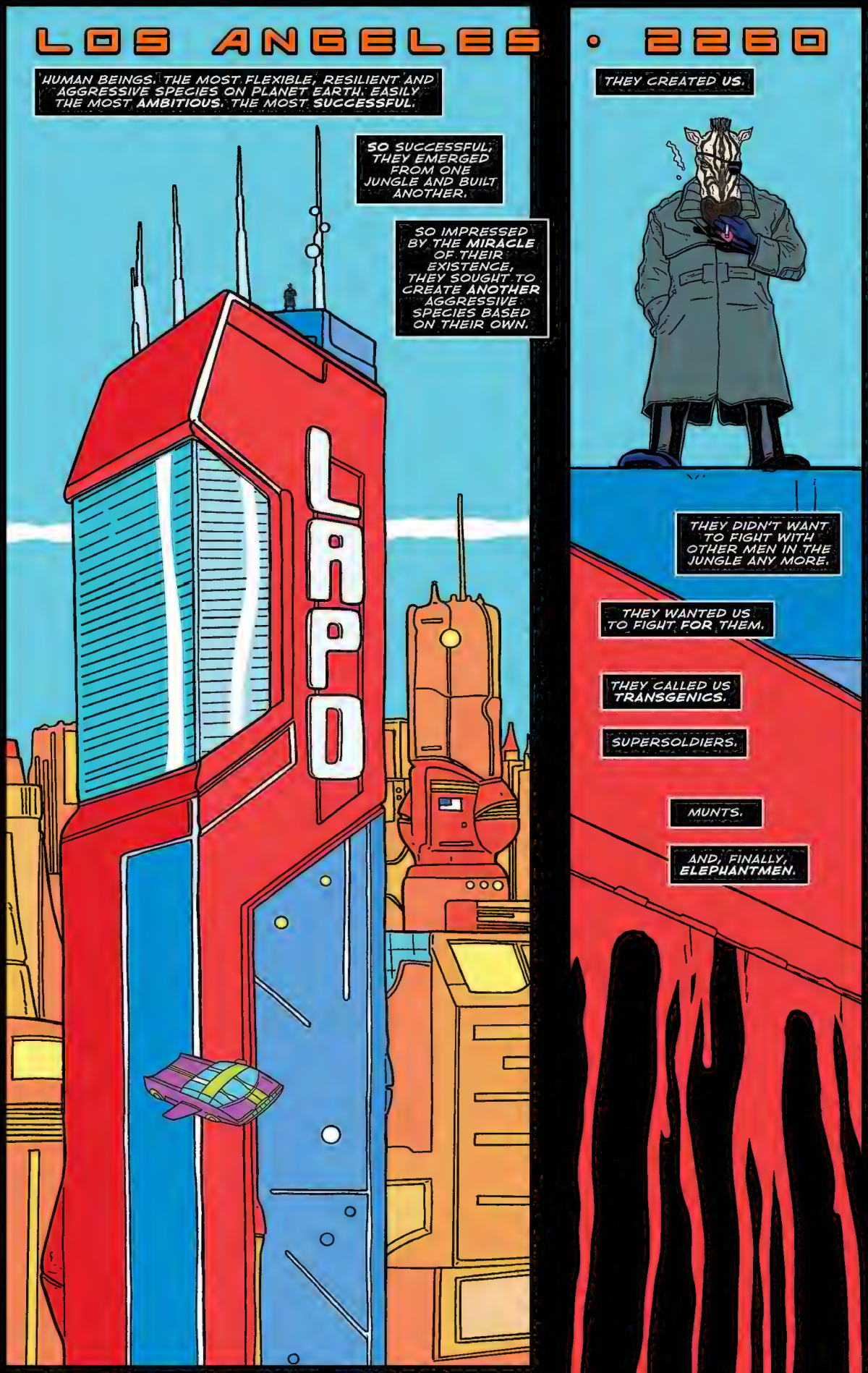

LOS ANGELES • 2260
HUMAN BEINGS. THE MOST FLEXIBLE, RESILIENT AND AGGRESSIVE SPECIES ON PLANET EARTH. EASILY THE MOST AMBITIOUS. THE MOST SUCCESSFUL.
SO SUCCESSFUL, THEY EMERGED FROM ONE JUNGLE AND BUILT ANOTHER.
SO IMPRESSED BY THE MIRACLE OF THEIR EXISTENCE, THEY SOUGHT TO CREATE ANOTHER AGGRESSIVE SPECIES BASED ON THEIR OWN.
LAPD
THEY CREATED US.
THEY DIDN'T WANT TO FIGHT WITH OTHER MEN IN THE JUNGLE ANY MORE.
THEY WANTED US TO FIGHT FOR THEM.
THEY CALLED US TRANSGENICS.
SUPERSOLDIERS.
MUNTS.
AND, FINALLY, ELEPHANTMEN.

image comics presents:

ELEPHANTMEN!

BLOOD & SAND

mark schweikert
Story

shaky kane
Art

richard starkings
Script

WHAT MAN FIRST LOOKED UPON EARTH'S BEAUTIFUL CREATURES AND FOUND THEM **LACKING?**

DID HE NOT SEE IN NATURE THE GRACE AND **SPIRITUALITY** HE THOUGHT EXISTED IN HIMSELF?, DID HE SEE NOTHING WORTHY OF **PRESERVATION?** OF **HONOR?**

DID HE SEE NOTHING TO HOLD **SACRED?**

DID HE SEE ONLY FUR AND MEAT AND GLUE?

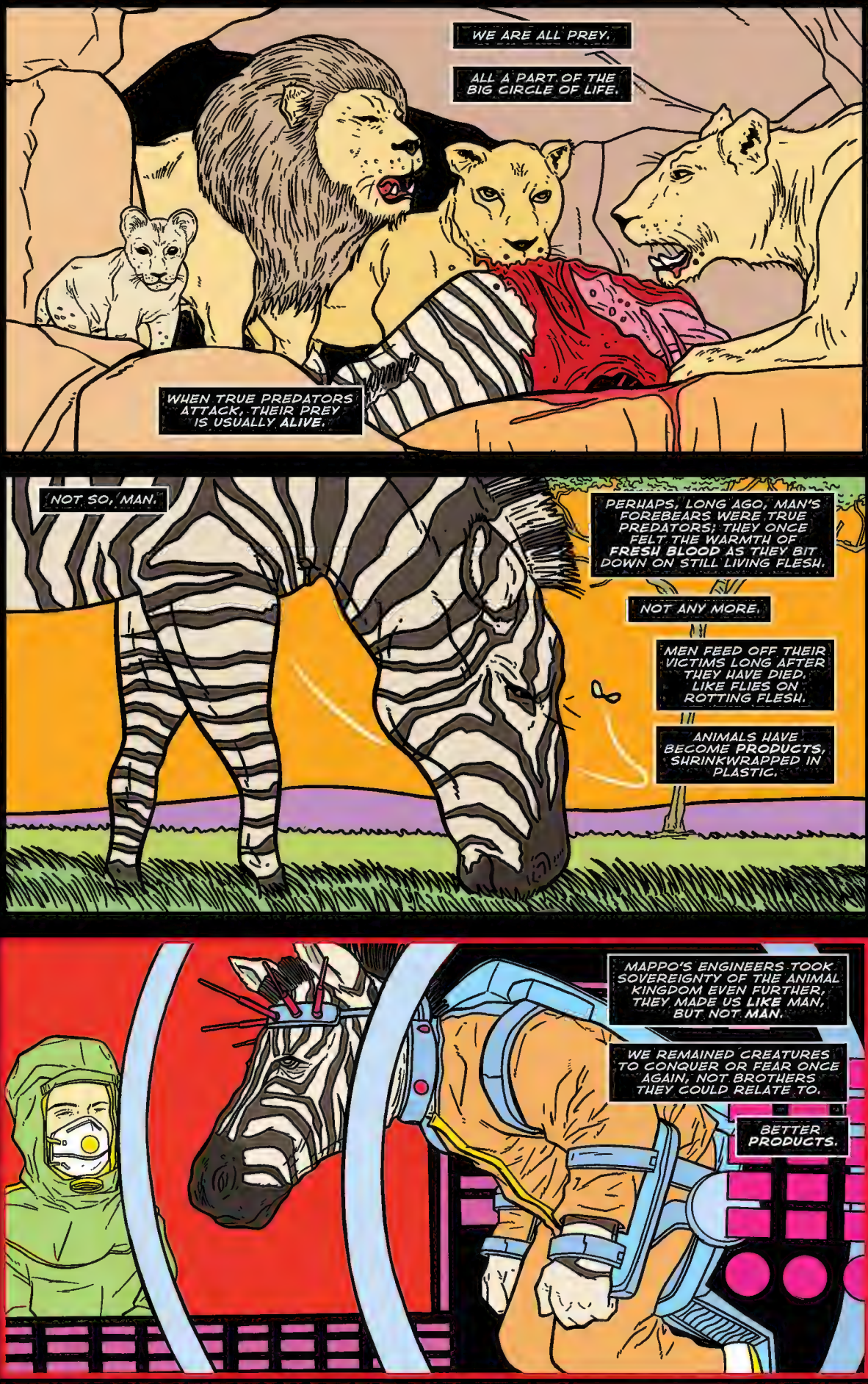
TROPHIES?

ONLY FEARSOME CREATURES WHICH, IF THEY COULD NOT BE CONQUERED AND **TAMED,** SHOULD BE CONTROLLED, EXPLOITED OR **DESTROYED.**

WHEN DID HE STOP LISTENING TO THE ELEMENTAL VOICES OF HIS HEART AND SOUL?

WHILE LOOKING AT THE SUNSET -- FEELING THE WARMTH OF SUNLIGHT ON HIS SKIN -- WHEN DID HE DECIDE THAT IT BELONGED ONLY TO HIM?

AND WHAT MAN FIRST LOOKED ACROSS THE PLAINS OF AFRICA AND THOUGHT TO HIMSELF, "THOSE ANIMALS SHOULD BE MORE LIKE MAN."?


WE ARE ALL PREY.
ALL A PART OF THE BIG CIRCLE OF LIFE.
WHEN TRUE PREDATORS ATTACK, THEIR PREY IS USUALLY ALIVE.
NOT SO, MAN.
PERHAPS, LONG AGO, MAN'S FOREBEARS WERE TRUE PREDATORS; THEY ONCE FELT THE WARMTH OF FRESH BLOOD AS THEY BIT DOWN ON STILL LIVING FLESH.
NOT ANY MORE.
MEN FEED OFF THEIR VICTIMS LONG AFTER THEY HAVE DIED. LIKE FLIES ON ROTTING FLESH.
ANIMALS HAVE BECOME PRODUCTS, SHRINKWRAPPED IN PLASTIC.
MAPPO'S ENGINEERS TOOK SOVEREIGNTY OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM EVEN FURTHER. THEY MADE US LIKE MAN, BUT NOT MAN.
WE REMAINED CREATURES TO CONQUER OR FEAR ONCE AGAIN, NOT BROTHERS THEY COULD RELATE TO.
BETTER PRODUCTS.

AS A MOTHER, NATURE CAN BE COLD AND CALLOUS, BUT ALL SHE WANTS IS FOR US TO BECOME STRONG.
MAN IS THE CRUEL FATHER. HE WANTS TO MAKE OUR STRENGTHS HIS OWN.
BEEEEEEP

SO WE FOUGHT FOR MAN. OUR STRENGTHS, HIS WEAKNESSES.
WE LEARNED ABOUT VICTORY AND DEFEAT. WE WERE MADE BOTH PREDATOR AND PREY.
WE BECAME ELEPHANTMEN. NEITHER ONE NOR THE OTHER.

WE WERE TAKEN FAR AWAY FROM OUR ANCESTRAL HOMELANDS. WE WERE AWARDED NEW PERCEPTIONS, NEW RESPONSIBILITIES.
BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP

NORTH HOLLYWOOD · 2255

I AM NO LONGER THE PREY.

BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP

I AM A PREDATOR.

FOR YEARS I WAS JUST A BEAT COP.

I GUESS THEY FIGURED THAT'S WHERE OLD SOLDIERS GO TO DIE.

EITHER THAT OR THE POSTAL SERVICE.

I KIND OF GOT USED TO THE **HEART DISEASE DIET.**

SOMETIMES IT'S USEFUL TO BE GENETICALLY IMMUNE TO DIABETES.

BUT I TOOK AN OATH.

AN OATH TO PRESERVE THE DIGNITY OF PEOPLE.

THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN BEINGS.

HOW ABOUT THAT?

BIP

AFTER KILLING SO MANY, FOR SO LONG.

EMERGENCY RADIO TRAFFIC WE HAVE **NINE-TWO-EIGHT**, UNKNOWN TROUBLE, **CHILD NOT BREATHING**, SASKATCHEWAN BOULEVARD, APARTMENT TWO--

FIFTEEN S-L-O **TRENCH** RESPONDING.

A COP. SENIOR LEAD OFFICER.

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY BLUE SKIES YOU WAKE UP TO, YOU'RE ALWAYS READY FOR STORMCLOUDS.

EVERY SOLDIER KNOWS THERE'S ONLY A THIN LINE BETWEEN REMEMBERING TOO MUCH AND REMEMBERING TOO LITTLE.

THERE ARE MEMORIES THAT CAN ROB YOU OF LIFE AND LIGHT.

MEMORIES THAT YOU HAVE TO KEEP TO YOURSELF.

I REMEMBER EVERYTHING.

THE PAIN. THE ANGER. THE MISERY. THE FEAR.

EVERYTHING WE WERE NOT SUPPOSED TO FEEL.

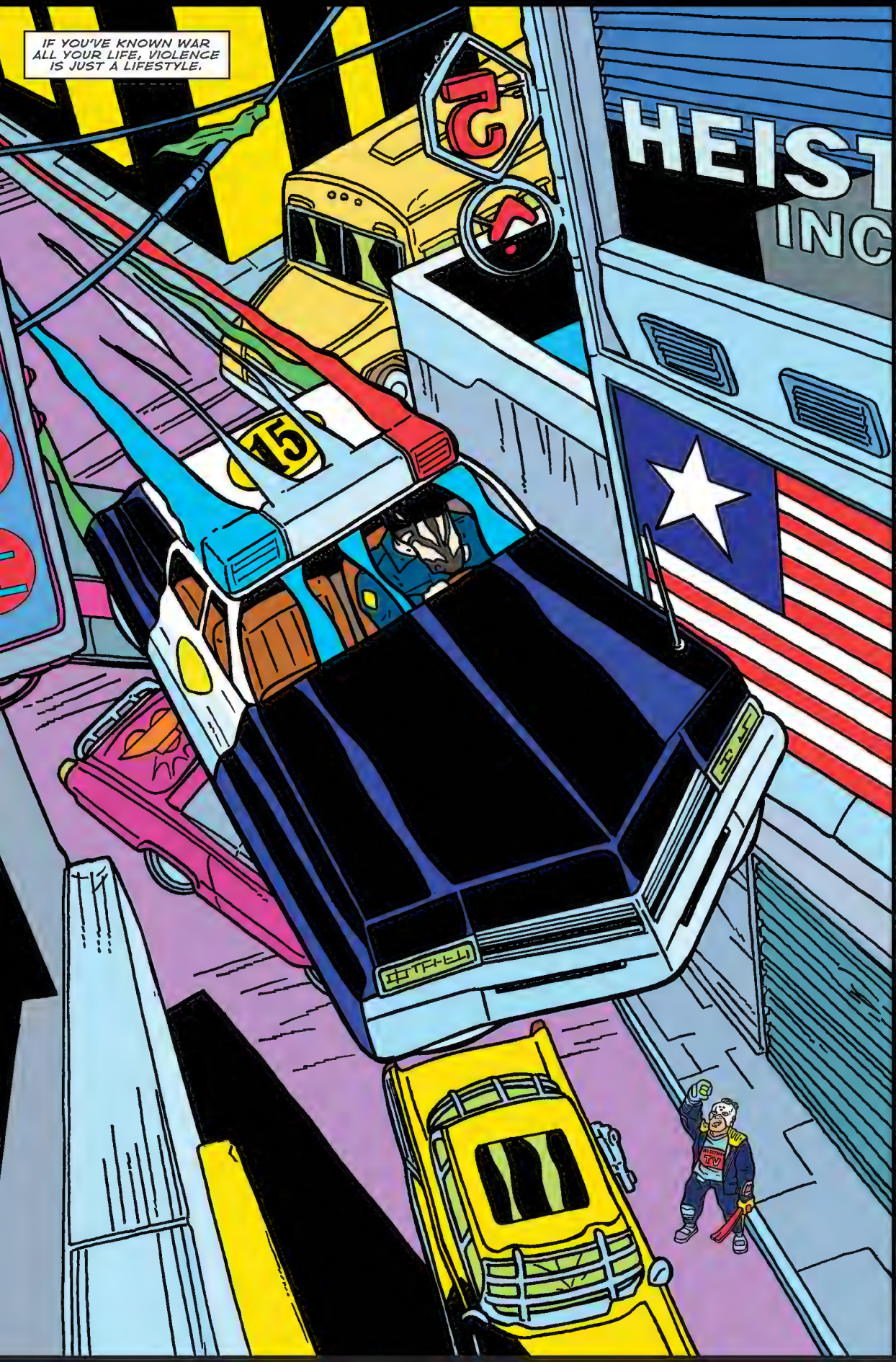
BUT WE WERE MEASURED BY MAN.

MADE MONSTERS BY MAN.

WE FOUGHT FOR MAN.

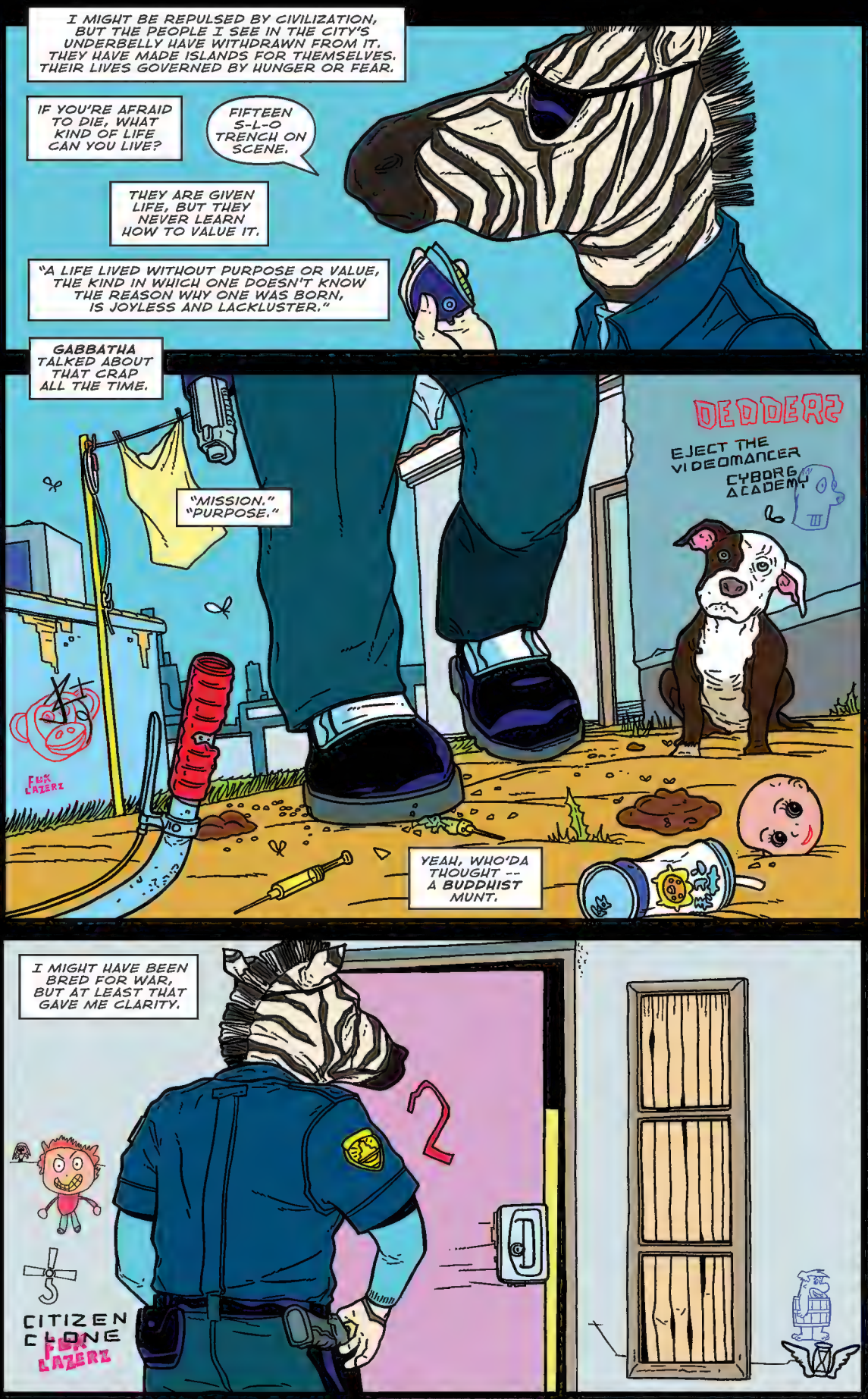
OUR STRENGTHS, HIS WEAKNESSES.

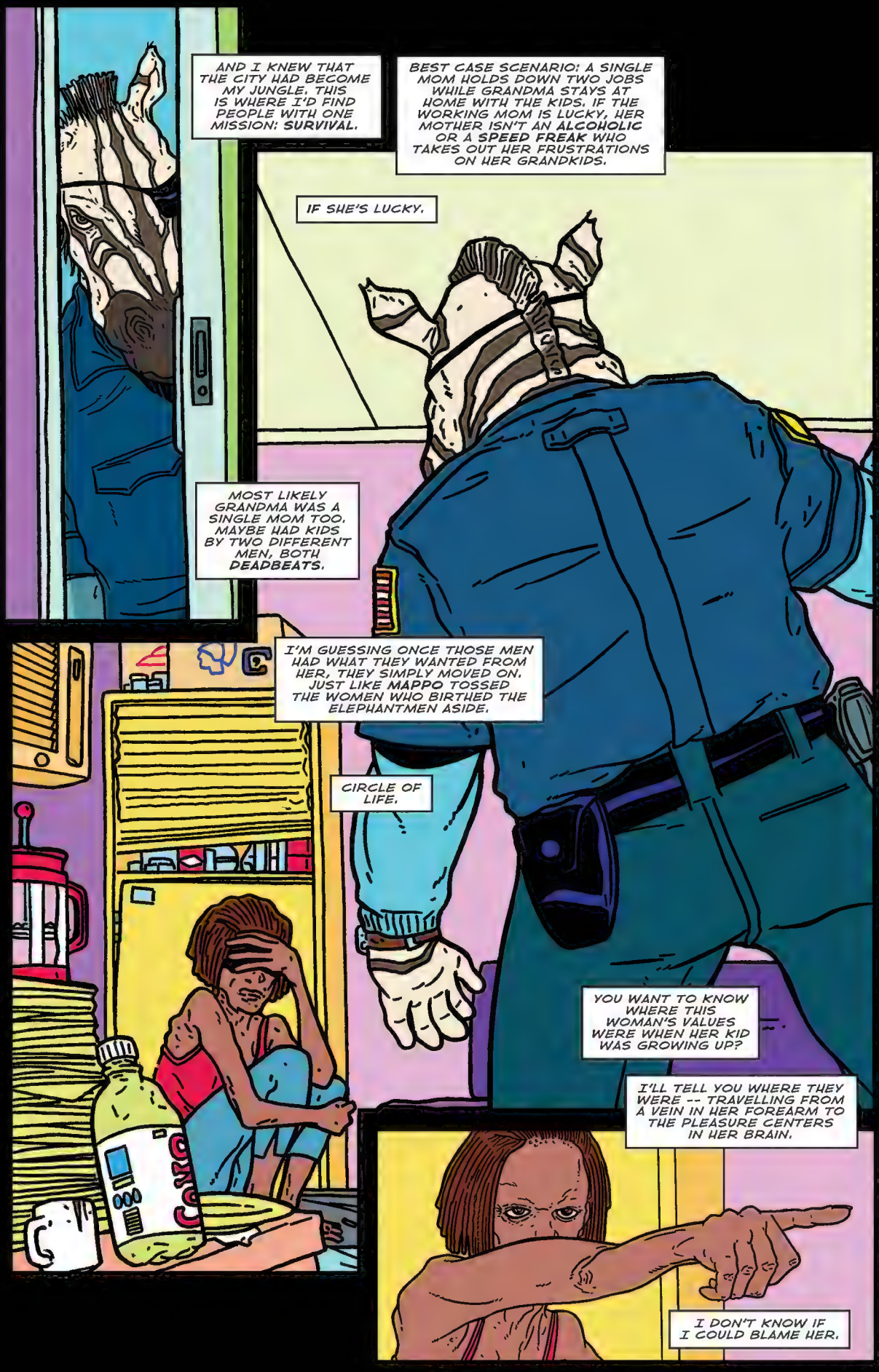
WE ARE NOT BRETHREN. WE ARE UNDERLINGS.


IF YOU'VE KNOWN WAR ALL YOUR LIFE, VIOLENCE IS JUST A LIFESTYLE.
HEIST
INC
15

THE SMELL HIT ME BEFORE I EVEN MADE IT TO THE DOOR.
THE SMELL OF BLAME AND INDECISION.
THE SMELL OF WASTED LIVES AND MEANINGLESS FUTURES.
THE SMELL OF DEATH.

I HEARD THE DULL MOANS OF A WOMAN SOBBING.
IT WAS THAT DISTINCT MOAN OF A WOMAN WHO HAS LOST A CHILD... A WOMAN WITH NO RECOURSE. NO SALVATION.
I'D HEARD THAT DISEASED SOUND BEFORE.
IN FRANCE DURING THE WAR.
OUAH-- OUAH...
MON PAUVRE PETIT BEBE.
BLOOD AND SAND--
I'D SHOT HER IN THE HEAD. PUT HER OUT OF HER MISERY.
AN ACT OF WAR. NOT AN ACT OF COMPASSION.


I MIGHT BE REPULSED BY CIVILIZATION, BUT THE PEOPLE I SEE IN THE CITY'S UNDERBELLY HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM IT. THEY HAVE MADE ISLANDS FOR THEMSELVES. THEIR LIVES GOVERNED BY HUNGER OR FEAR.
IF YOU'RE AFRAID TO DIE, WHAT KIND OF LIFE CAN YOU LIVE?
FIFTEEN S-L-O TRENCH ON SCENE.
THEY ARE GIVEN LIFE, BUT THEY NEVER LEARN HOW TO VALUE IT.
"A LIFE LIVED WITHOUT PURPOSE OR VALUE, THE KIND IN WHICH ONE DOESN'T KNOW THE REASON WHY ONE WAS BORN, IS JOYLESS AND LACKLUSTER."
GABBATHA TALKED ABOUT THAT CRAP ALL THE TIME.
"MISSION." "PURPOSE."
DEDDERZ
EJECT THE VIDEOMANCER
CYBORG ACADEMY
FUK LAZERZ
YEAH, WHO'DA THOUGHT -- A BUDDHIST MUNT.
I MIGHT HAVE BEEN BRED FOR WAR, BUT AT LEAST THAT GAVE ME CLARITY.
CITIZEN CLONE
FUK LAZERZ

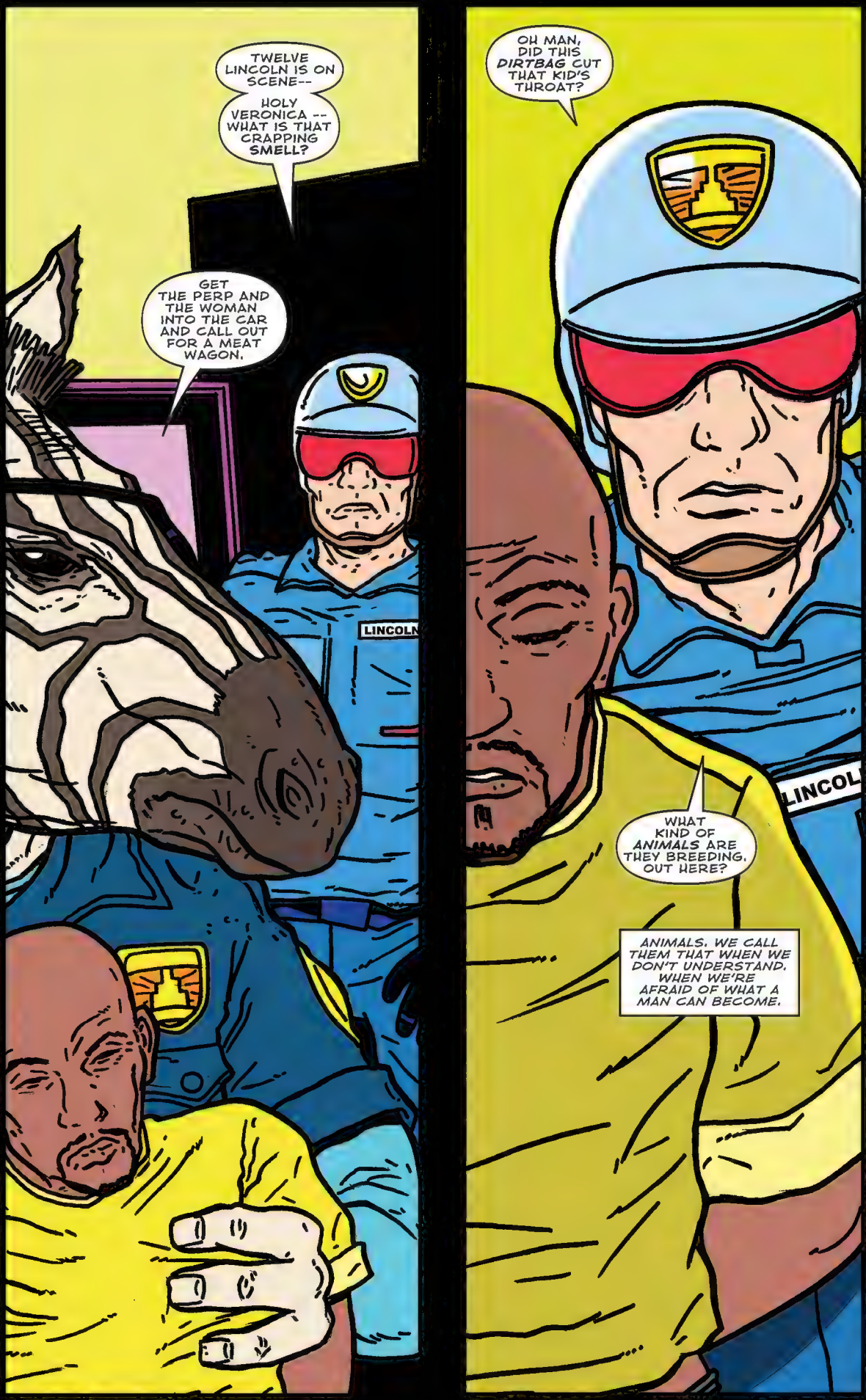

AND I KNEW THAT THE CITY HAD BECOME MY JUNGLE. THIS IS WHERE I'D FIND PEOPLE WITH ONE MISSION: SURVIVAL.
BEST CASE SCENARIO: A SINGLE MOM HOLDS DOWN TWO JOBS WHILE GRANDMA STAYS AT HOME WITH THE KIDS. IF THE WORKING MOM IS LUCKY, HER MOTHER ISN'T AN ALCOHOLIC OR A SPEED FREAK WHO TAKES OUT HER FRUSTRATIONS ON HER GRANDKIDS.
IF SHE'S LUCKY.
MOST LIKELY GRANDMA WAS A SINGLE MOM TOO. MAYBE HAD KIDS BY TWO DIFFERENT MEN, BOTH DEADBEATS.
I'M GUESSING ONCE THOSE MEN HAD WHAT THEY WANTED FROM HER, THEY SIMPLY MOVED ON. JUST LIKE MAPPO TOSSED THE WOMEN WHO BIRTHED THE ELEPHANTMEN ASIDE.
CIRCLE OF LIFE.
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE THIS WOMAN'S VALUES WERE WHEN HER KID WAS GROWING UP?
I'LL TELL YOU WHERE THEY WERE -- TRAVELLING FROM A VEIN IN HER FOREARM TO THE PLEASURE CENTERS IN HER BRAIN.
I DON'T KNOW IF I COULD BLAME HER.

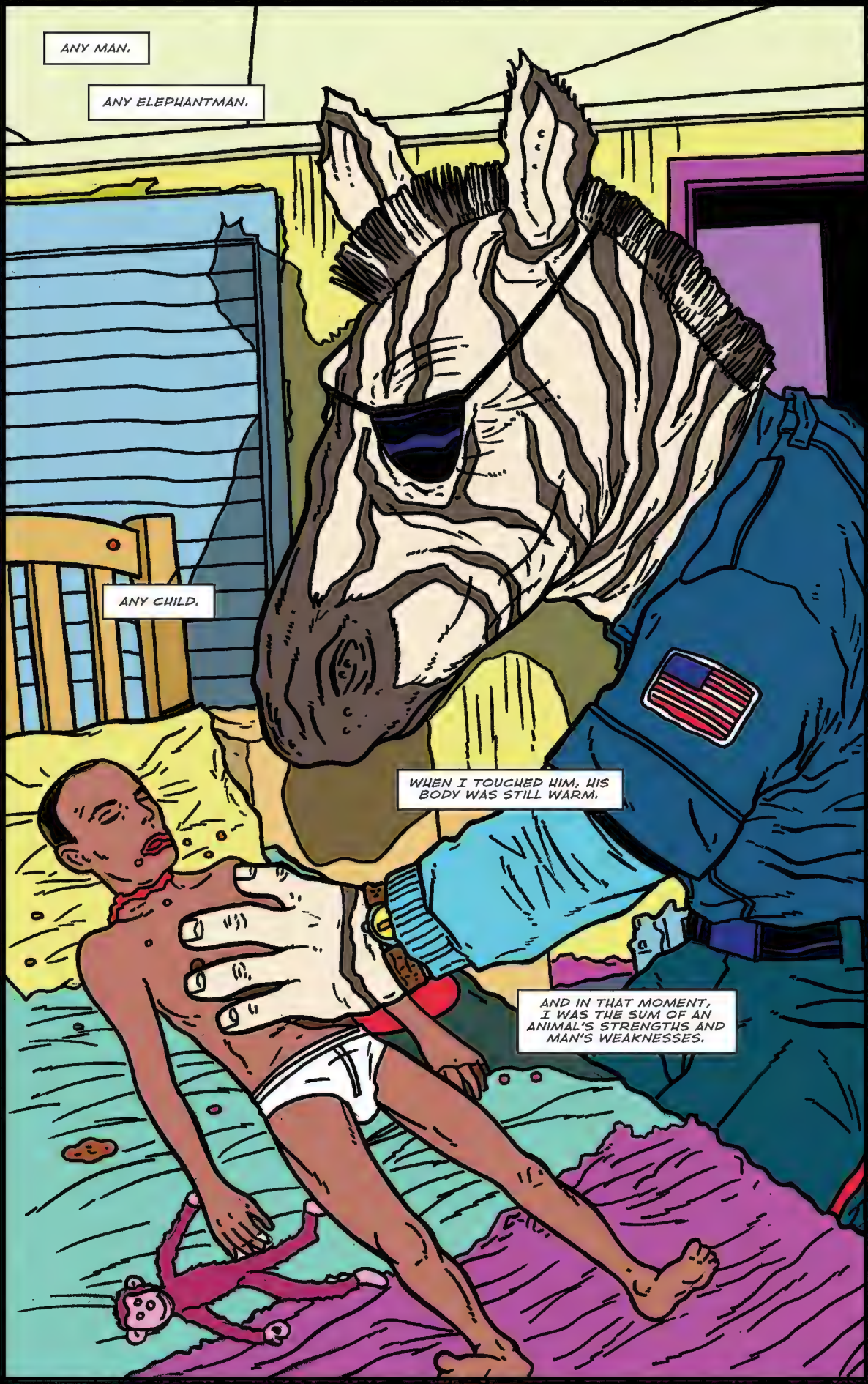
IT'S EASY TO TALK ABOUT VALUES AND MISSION WHEN YOU FIT THE IDEALS SOCIETY DEEMS HONORABLE.
BUT WHEN LIFE SERVES YOU A SHIT SANDWICH, AND THERE'S NOTHING ELSE TO EAT...
YOU TAKE A BITE AND TRY TO HOLD IT DOWN.
EVEN BEFORE I TOOK HIS PULSE, I KNEW THAT THE KID WAS DEAD.

I COULD HEAR LABORED BREATHING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BED.
THE KILLER, LYING IN WAIT?
BEAT MY GUEST
SNIFF THIS
NANCY POSED
NOTHING SO DIGNIFIED.
THE MAN WAS OUT. I SAW THE DULL POCKET KNIFE HE'D USED TO KILL THE BOY CLUTCHED IN HIS HAND.

HE COULDN'T EVEN RESIST.
AS I CUFFED HIM I SAW BLOODY HESITATION MARKS ON THE SUSPECT'S WRIST. THIS GUY HAD HAD NO PROBLEM ENDING THE LIFE OF A CHILD BUT WAS TOO MUCH OF A COWARD TO TAKE HIS OWN.
SO HE'D FELT GUILTY. I KNEW IF HE WASN'T THE FATHER, HE WAS STILL FAMILY. AN UNCLE. MAYBE A BROTHER.
AND THERE IT WAS. AN EMPTY BOTTLE OF COUGH SYRUP. A POOR MAN'S HIGH. THE KID MUST HAVE PUT UP A FIGHT WHEN THIS CHUD HAD TRIED TO SNATCH IT FROM HIM.

SUDDENLY MY GUN WAS IN MY HAND AND I FOUND MYSELF TAKING THE SLACK OFF OF THE TRIGGER. AND I WAS THINKING, "I CAN DELIVER JUSTICE NOW."
WHO WOULD CARE?
SO THEY MADE ME TAKE AN OATH. SO WHAT?
THERE'S NO DIGNITY HERE TO PROTECT. NO GRACE. NO SPIRITUALITY. NO HONOR. NOTHING WORTHY...
NOTHING WORTHY... OF PRESERVATION.
HIS LIFE. WAS IT SACRED?
WAS MINE?
OLD INSTINCTS.
NATURE IS THE GREAT EQUALIZER. IT EVENS THINGS OUT. DOESN'T NEED MY HELP.
I EASED OFF THE TRIGGER.


TWELVE LINCOLN IS ON SCENE--
HOLY VERONICA -- WHAT IS THAT CRAPPING SMELL?
GET THE PERP AND THE WOMAN INTO THE CAR AND CALL OUT FOR A MEAT WAGON.
LINCOLN
OH MAN, DID THIS DIRTBAG CUT THAT KID'S THROAT?
LINCOL
WHAT KIND OF ANIMALS ARE THEY BREEDING OUT HERE?
ANIMALS. WE CALL THEM THAT WHEN WE DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHEN WE'RE AFRAID OF WHAT A MAN CAN BECOME.


ANY MAN.
ANY ELEPHANTMAN.
ANY CHILD.
WHEN I TOUCHED HIM, HIS BODY WAS STILL WARM.
AND IN THAT MOMENT, I WAS THE SUM OF AN ANIMAL'S STRENGTHS AND MAN'S WEAKNESSES.

I'M HAPPY TO REPORT.
LAPD

THE FEELING DIDN'T LAST LONG.
"The city is not a concrete jungle, it is a human zoo."
Desmond Morris

3

LYNGEN • NORWAY • 2239
ELEPHANTMEN!
WELL, ONE OF THEM, ANYWAY... I SAW IT OVER THE RIDGE...
LARS! =HUFF HUFF= WAIT UP!
YOU'VE BEEN EATING TOO MANY OF MAMA'S PASTRIES, ØIVIND, BUT DON'T WORRY, WE'RE NEARLY THERE...

I DUNNO, LARS, IT'S REAL SLIPPY...
MAYBE WE SHOULD, >HUFF< TURN BACK?
WAIT! QUIET NOW! I THINK I SEE HIM...
BAM! BAM!
I GOTTA >HUFF< I GOTTA...
BAM!
GOTCHA!
>HUFF< >A-HUFF< Oh...

LOOK AT THAT! RIGHT IN THE *THROAT!*
YOU THINK *HENRIK* KILLED IT? I BET HE DID.
PROBABLY NOT. MAMA SAYS HE'S IN FRANCE.
I BET HE KILLED IT ANYWAY.
WHERE'S *AGATHE?*

SHE'D WANT TO SEE THIS, I BET...
NAH... SHE LIKES GIRL STUFF NOW.
Y'KNOW, SHE'S AT THAT AGE...
HEY, I DARE YOU TO STEAL ITS HELMET!
WHAT? I CAN'T...
HAHA! YOU HAVE TO! I DARED YOU!
I DOUBLE DARE YOU!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHA
LARS! WAIT UP!
VRRM

Marian Churchland
Richard Starkings
Marley Zarcone
Agatha H.
BUFFALO GALS, MHMM HM HMM HM HMMM
HMM HM HMMM
HMM HM HMMM

AS I WAS WALKING DOWN THE STREET
DOWN THE STREET
DOWN THE STREET
A PRETTY GAL I CHANCE TO MEET
UNDER THE SILVERY MOON.
ASKED HER IF SHE'D STOP AND--
HONK HONK HONNNK
?
STOP AND TALK...
HMM HM HMMM MHMM HM HMMM

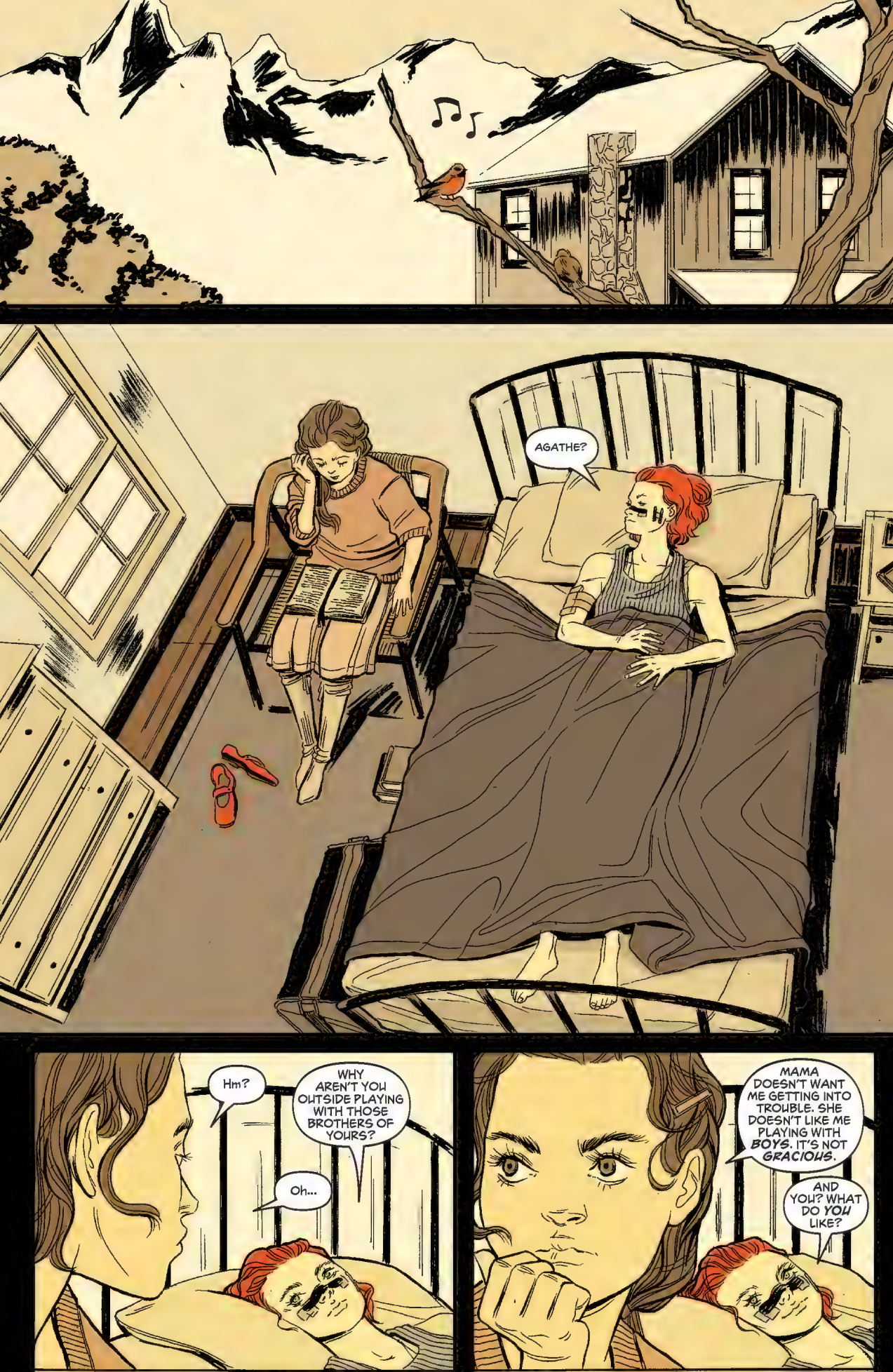
HMM...
OH!
VOIGHT!
WELL, I DON'T *KNOW*, VOIGHT, I HAVE *AGATHE* HERE, AFTER ALL...

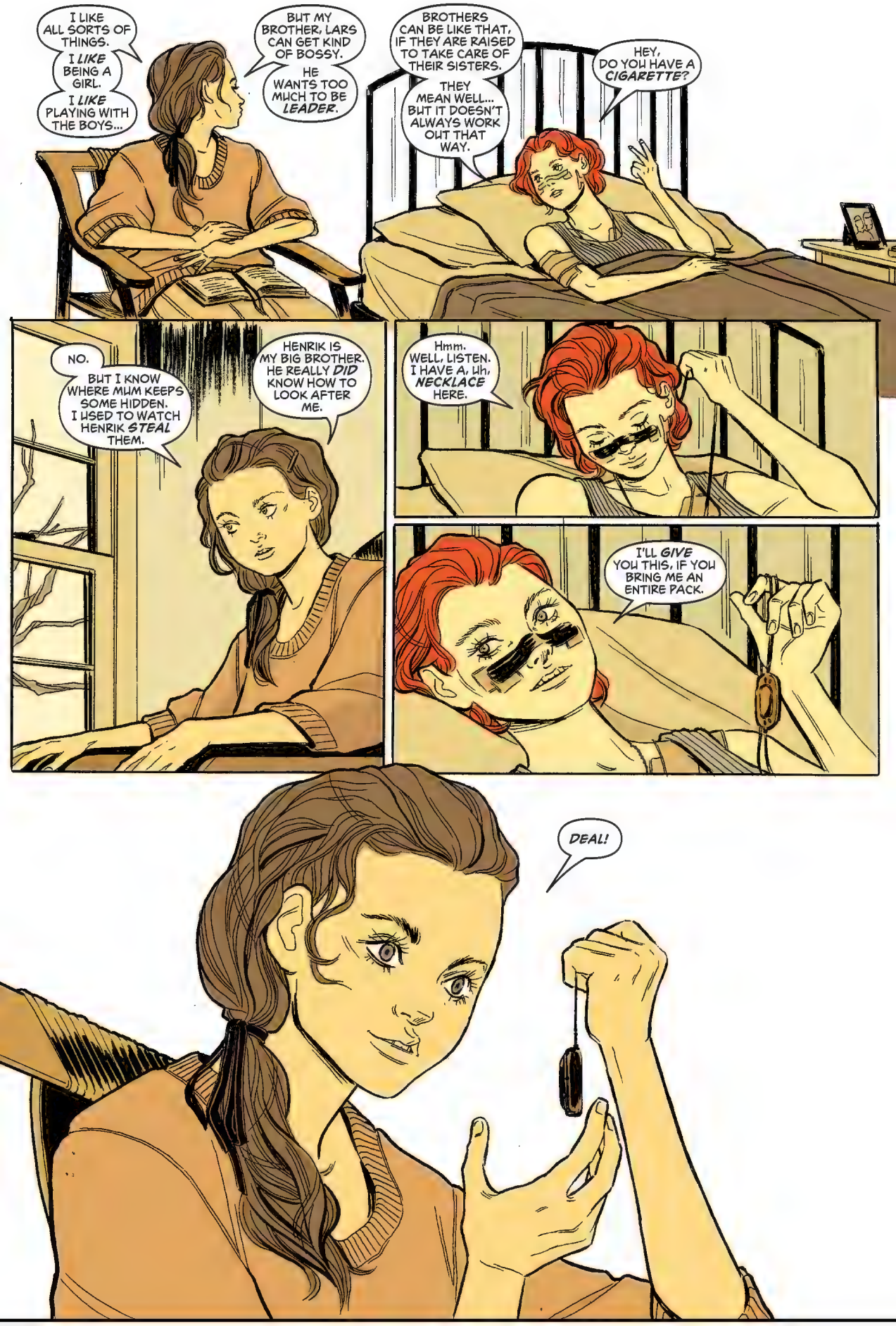
WE, Uh, FOUND HER SEVERAL MILES AWAY, NEAR THE WAR ZONE.
SHE WAS GRAZED BY A BULLET... BACK OF THE HEAD.
MEDICS PATCHED HER UP, BUT WE, Ah, WE NEED TO MAKE SURE SHE'S KEPT, Um, SAFE.
I HATE TO PRESS HER ON YOU, MRS. LEIBERG,
SEE, THE U.N ARE VERY INTERESTED IN HER, AND, HONESTLY, MUPPE -- I NEED SOMEONE I CAN TRUST.
HMM. VERY WELL, I'LL TAKE HER.
BUT PLEASE LEAVE US WITH SOME EXTRA PROVISIONS. WE BARELY HAVE ENOUGH AS IT IS!
THERE IS A WAR ON.
AND MEDICINE, WE NEED MORE MEDICINES!
OF COURSE, MUPPE.
JUST TAKE CARE OF HER AS BEST YOU CAN UNTIL I CAN GET BACK AND TAKE HER WHERE SHE'S NEEDED.
HER NAME IS YVETTE.

YVETTE? VOIGHT... ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT THIS IS--
Ahem, WELL, YES, OF COURSE WE'D LOVE TO STAY BUT WE HAVE TO GET GOING...
VOIGHT! HEY, VOIGHT! LOOK!
LOOK AT WHAT I GOT!
WOW. NICE ONE, LARS!
I HELPED A BIT.
LARS! HOW MANY TIMES DID I TELL YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM THOSE-- THOSE THINGS?
YA WANNA BUY IT, VOIGHT?
HE'LL DO NO SUCH THING, YOUNG MAN!
LEAVE IT OUTSIDE AND GO WASH YOUR HANDS!
I'M GLAD YOU'RE NOT SPENDING SO MUCH TIME WITH YOUR FOOLISH BROTHERS, AGATHE.
GOOD GRACIOUS, ARE YOU WEARING MY LIPSTICK?

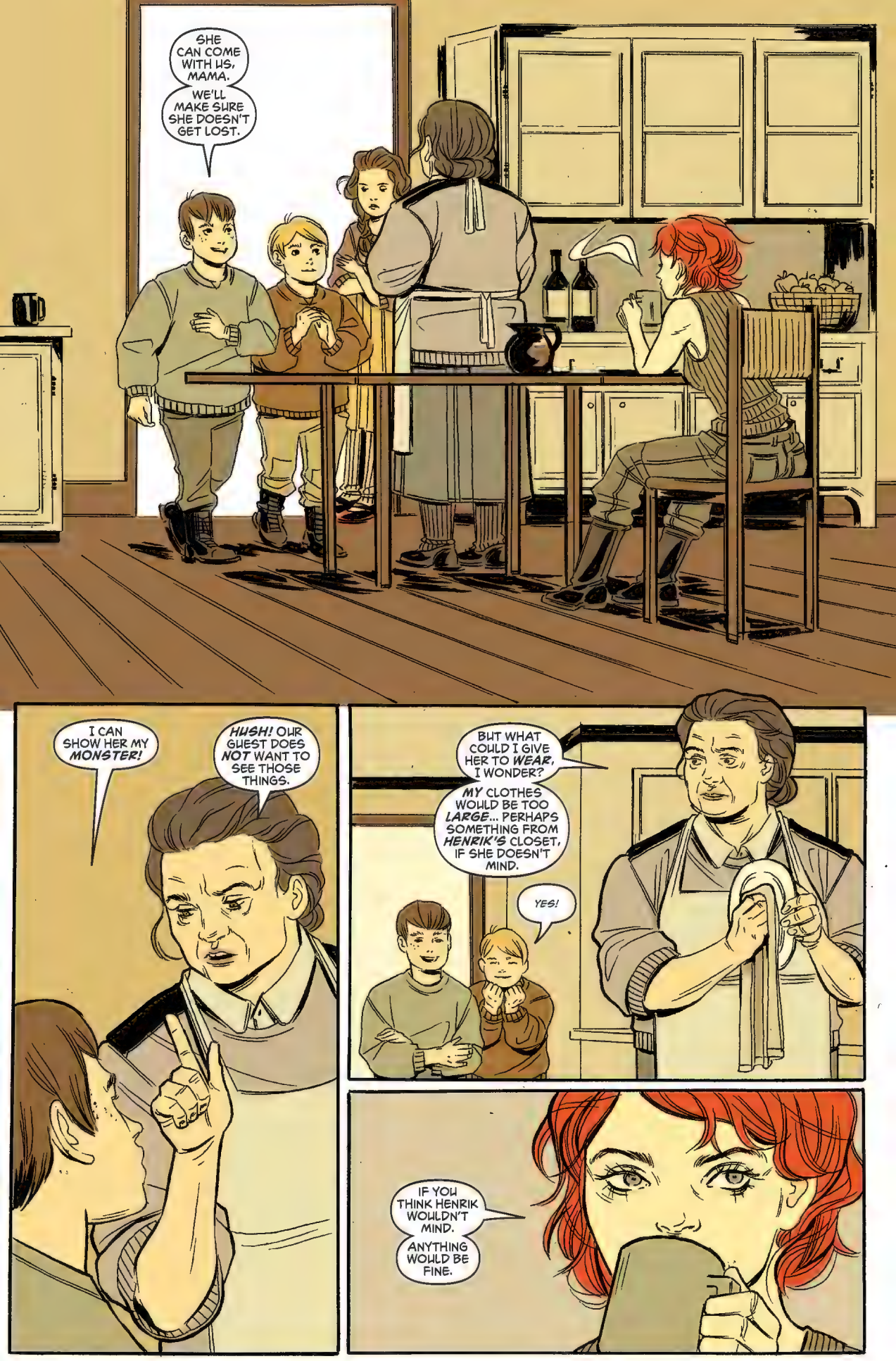
GASTON... IT'S A WAR... A WAR...
CANNOT POSSIBLY HOPE TO WIN...
GASTON...?
LARS --
DON'T STARE.
DON'T YOU KNOW WHO THAT IS?!
MAMA. I THINK OUR GUEST IS AWAKE.
Hmmm?
DEAR HEAVENS! SIT STILL, MY GIRL...
YOU WERE SHOT, YOU HAD A FALL...

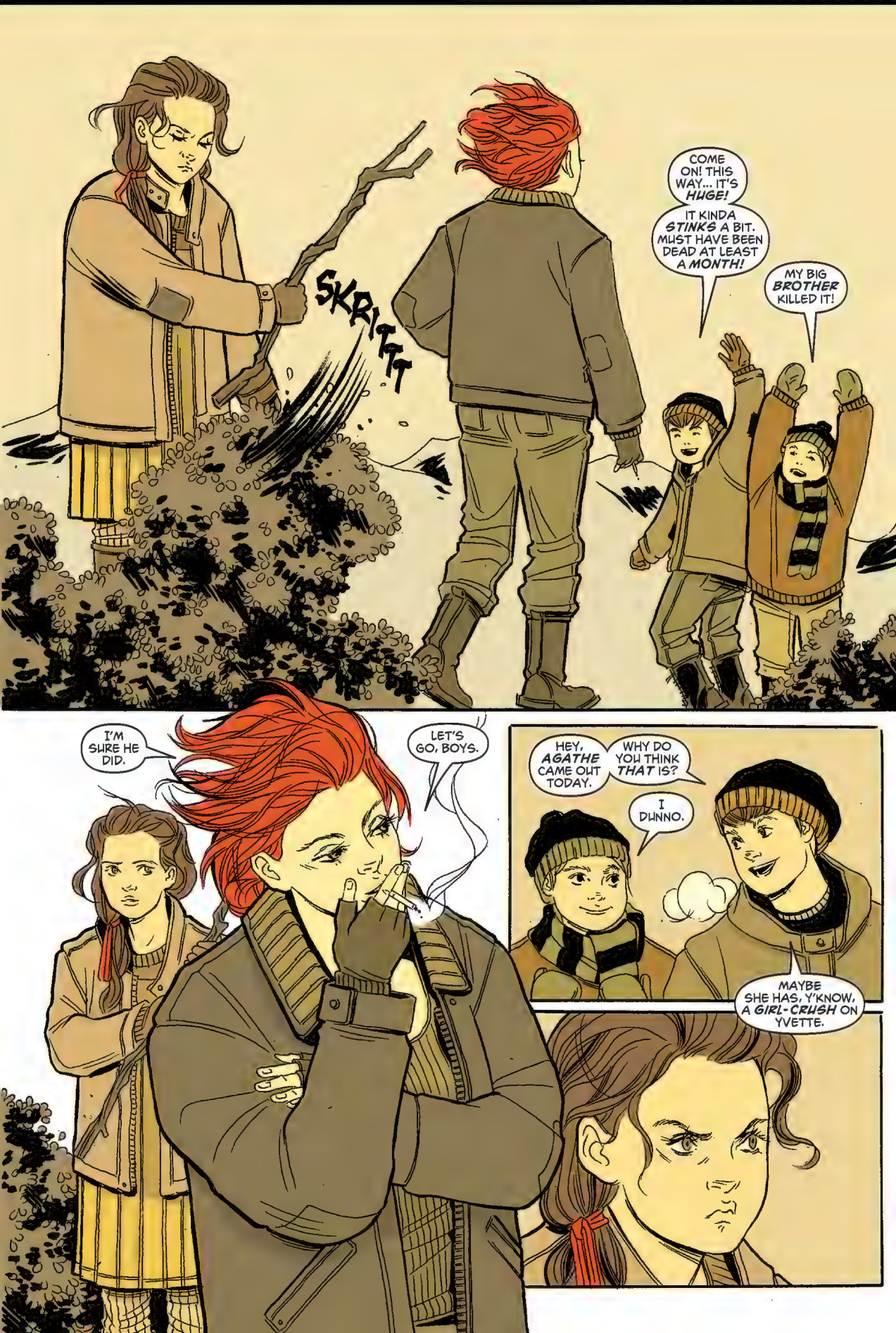
REST... YOU HAVE A BROKEN RIB, I THINK.
BUT YOU CAN STAY WITH US WHILE YOU RECOVER.
WHERE-- uh, WHERE AM I?
SAFE. IN MY HOME. MILES FROM... YOU KNOW, ANY TROUBLE.
MY NAME IS MUPPE. THESE ARE MY SONS, LARS AND ØIVIND, AND MY DAUGHTER, AGATHE.
HI.
HULLO.
AND, Er, DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR NAME?
MY NAME?
Oh, MY NAME IS...
MY NAME IS YVETTE.


AGATHE?
Hm?
WHY AREN'T YOU OUTSIDE PLAYING WITH THOSE BROTHERS OF YOURS?
Oh...
MAMA DOESN'T WANT ME GETTING INTO TROUBLE. SHE DOESN'T LIKE ME PLAYING WITH BOYS. IT'S NOT GRACIOUS.
AND YOU? WHAT DO YOU LIKE?


I LIKE ALL SORTS OF THINGS.
I *LIKE* BEING A GIRL.
I *LIKE* PLAYING WITH THE BOYS...
BUT MY BROTHER, LARS CAN GET KIND OF BOSSY.
HE WANTS TOO MUCH TO BE *LEADER*.
BROTHERS CAN BE LIKE THAT, IF THEY ARE RAISED TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR SISTERS.
THEY MEAN WELL... BUT IT DOESN'T ALWAYS WORK OUT THAT WAY.
HEY, DO YOU HAVE A *CIGARETTE*?
NO.
BUT I KNOW WHERE MUM KEEPS SOME HIDDEN. I USED TO WATCH HENRIK *STEAL* THEM.
HENRIK IS MY BIG BROTHER. HE REALLY *DID* KNOW HOW TO LOOK AFTER ME.
Hmm. WELL, LISTEN. I HAVE A, Uh, *NECKLACE* HERE.
I'LL *GIVE* YOU THIS, IF YOU BRING ME AN ENTIRE PACK.
DEAL!

THANK YOU. I HAVEN'T HAD COFFEE SINCE... WELL, A VERY LONG TIME.
GRACIOUS ME, GIRL, YOU'VE WOLFED DOWN TWO BREAKFASTS ALREADY IN A HALF HOUR.
NOT EVEN MY ELDEST COULD EAT LIKE THIS.
YOUR ELDEST? WOULD THAT BE HENRIK?
AGATHE SEEMS VERY FOND OF HIM...
WELL, AFTER MY HUSBAND DIED, HENRIK WAS LIKE A FATHER TO HER...
TO ALL OF THEM, OF COURSE.
NORMALLY I'D RECOMMEND A NICE WALK IN OUR COUNTRYSIDE, TO A CONVALESCENT LIKE YOURSELF, I MEAN...
BUT IT WOULD BE SO UNPLEASANT, WITH THE COLD WEATHER, AND THE WAR.
I'D LIKE A WALK, ACTUALLY.

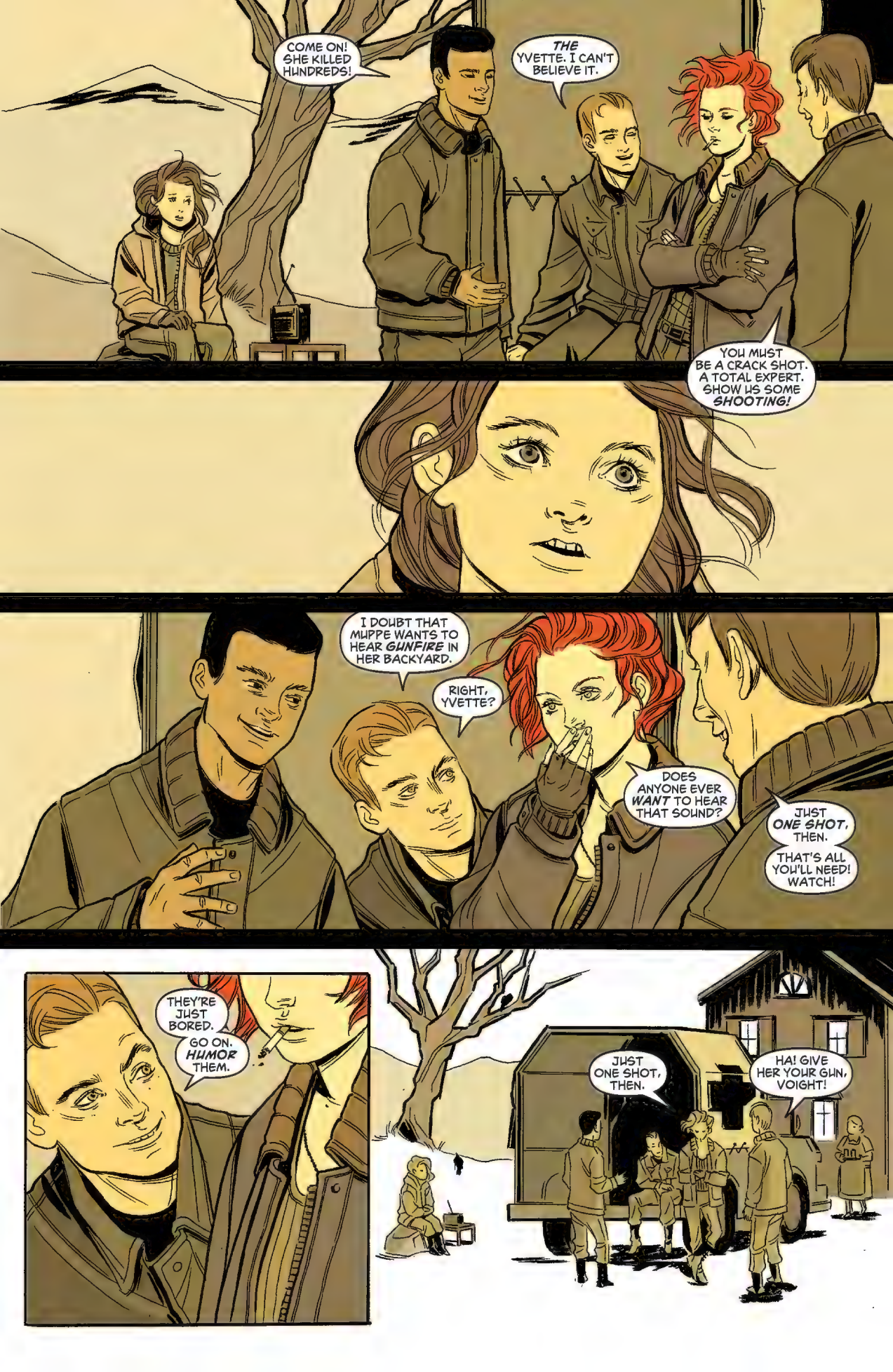

SHE CAN COME WITH US, MAMA.
WE'LL MAKE SURE SHE DOESN'T GET LOST.
I CAN SHOW HER MY MONSTER!
HUSH! OUR GUEST DOES NOT WANT TO SEE THOSE THINGS.
BUT WHAT COULD I GIVE HER TO WEAR, I WONDER?
MY CLOTHES WOULD BE TOO LARGE... PERHAPS SOMETHING FROM HENRIK'S CLOSET, IF SHE DOESN'T MIND.
YES!
IF YOU THINK HENRIK WOULDN'T MIND.
ANYTHING WOULD BE FINE.


SKRITT
COME ON! THIS WAY... IT'S HUGE!
IT KINDA STINKS A BIT. MUST HAVE BEEN DEAD AT LEAST A MONTH!
MY BIG BROTHER KILLED IT!
I'M SURE HE DID.
LET'S GO, BOYS.
HEY, AGATHE CAME OUT TODAY.
WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?
I DUNNO.
MAYBE SHE HAS, Y'KNOW, A GIRL-CRUSH ON YVETTE.

SEE, THERE IT IS. DEAD AS A DOORNAIL.
JUST HOLD YOUR BREATH IF YOU GO CLOSE.
Huh. I REMEMBER THIS ONE.
Oh!

IS--IS THAT YOUR NAME?
IT IS.
WHY DO YOU DO THAT?
TO FRIGHTEN THEM.
THAT ONE HAD JUST KILLED A SOLDIER. ONE OF YOUR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN.
SO I KILLED HIM.
AND THAT IS HOW IT ALL EVENS OUT.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
YOU MUST HAVE BEEN AT STRASBOURG, THEN.
IT WAS A SLAUGHTER! THE ELEPHANTMEN DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HIT THEM, RIGHT? THAT'S WHAT WE HEARD.
HOW MANY DID YOU KILL?


COME ON! SHE KILLED HUNDREDS!
THE YVETTE. I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
YOU MUST BE A CRACK SHOT. A TOTAL EXPERT. SHOW US SOME SHOOTING!
I DOUBT THAT MUPPE WANTS TO HEAR GUNFIRE IN HER BACKYARD.
RIGHT, YVETTE?
DOES ANYONE EVER WANT TO HEAR THAT SOUND?
JUST ONE SHOT, THEN.
THAT'S ALL YOU'LL NEED! WATCH!
THEY'RE JUST BORED.
GO ON. HUMOR THEM.
JUST ONE SHOT, THEN.
HA! GIVE HER YOUR GUN, VOIGHT!

HERE.
HEY, MAMA, DID YOU KNOW WE'VE BEEN NURSING A HERO?
HOW ABOUT THAT OLD TREE, OVER THERE?
SO I SEE.
SHE KILLS ELEPHANTMEN, MAMA!
LOOK, SEE OVER THERE?

THERE.
THE BENT SIGNPOST.
YEAH. NEXT STOP -- NOWHERE!
A SIGNPOST.
ANYONE CAN HIT A PIECE OF METAL.
THE REAL TRICK IS TO IMAGINE IT'S BREATHING, IT'S NINE FEET TALL WITH TUSKS, AND IT'S POINTING A MISSILE LAUNCHER AT YOUR HEAD...
KRAK
KTANG
Oh MAN.
Oh MANNN...
YVETTE!
Oh WOW, SHE ACTUALLY DID IT!
SHE'S EVEN BETTER THAN HENRIK COULD EVER HOPE TO BE!

HANS. TIE THE TARP DOWN, WILL YOU?
YUP. GOT IT.

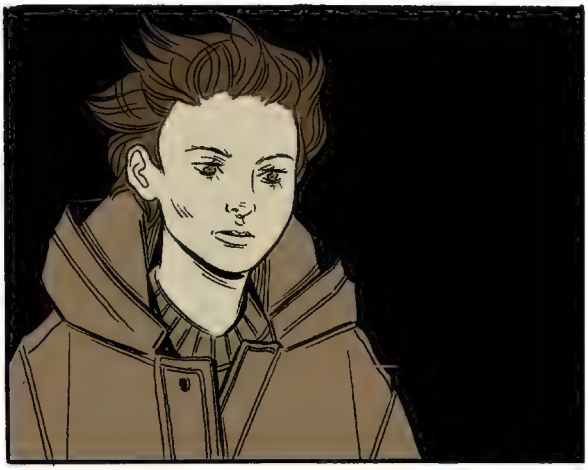
ZZZZP
AGATHE...
WHAT-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M LEAVING, MAMA. I'M GOING TO JOIN THE MILITIA!
I'M GOING TO BE A HERO JUST LIKE HENRIK AND YVETTE!
DEAR GOD! AGATHE --
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO YOUR HAIR?!

YOU WILL DO NO SUCH THING!
I WILL! YOU CAN'T STOP ME!
YOU DIDN'T STOP HENRIK!
YOU DIDN'T ARGUE WHEN HE WENT AWAY TO FIGHT!
HENRIK... HENRIK IS DEAD, AGATHE! HE'S DEAD!
THOSE FILTHY MONSTERS -- THAT-THAT CREATURE OUT THERE...
I WISH -- I WISH I HAD STOPPED HIM.
Oh, HENRIK, HENRIK...
YOU'RE LYING!
YOU JUST WANT ME TO ROT HERE!
MAMA...? HENRIK IS DEAD...?
NO...

THE FRENCH GIRL.
THIS IS HER FAULT.
SHE HAS TO LEAVE.
AFTER ALL I'VE DONE FOR HER, THIS IS MY REWARD?
YVETTE!
I'm so sorry
I lost a brother too
Yvette

READY WHEN YOU ARE.
HOLD ON, HOLD ON...
VOIGHT!
Hmm?
AGATHE?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE? YOU SHOULD BE IN BED.
NO, NO I SHOULDN'T, YOU SEE...
Oh, VOIGHT...
AGATHE?!
WHAT?!!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?
HAVE YOU GONE MAD?
I'M COMING WITH YOU! I'M GOING TO FIGHT WITH YOU JUST LIKE HENRIK AND YVETTE!
YOU CAN'T COME WITH US. GO BACK INSIDE, YOU FOOLISH CHILD!
VOIGHT? YOU READY TO GO?
THINK ABOUT YOUR MOTHER, GIRL!
OKAY, FRANCK, I'M READY. LET'S MOVE.
VRMM



AGAIN
HELP

Anna
de ton frère

4

ELEPHANTMEN

El·e·phant·men [el-*uh*-*fuh*nt-men] noun:
1. Transgenics; human/animal hybrids, genetically engineered by the **MAPPO Corporation** for military deployment in the **Afro-Sino War** (2239-2243). Rehabilitated by the **United Nations**, these creatures were gradually inculcated into human society.
2. Derogatory term for such.

THE ARCTIC CIRCLE • 2260

"HE'S WEAK...

"HE'S HUNGRY...

"BUT HE'S PREPARED TO FIGHT FOR A MEAL."

TUNGUSKA!

Richard Starkings
Story

Axel Medellin
Art

RRRRR
"LET'S WAIT THIS ONE OUT."

RRRRRR
"IF THE BEAR TAKES HIM DOWN, WE KILL THE BEAR AND TAKE THE MUNT'S CARCASS...
RRARGH
OOF!
"IF HE KILLS THE BEAR, HE'LL BE WEAKER STILL...

GEMORROJ!
RAAAR
POSHYOL TY!
SHK
"AND HOW MUCH FIGHT DO YOU THINK HE'LL HAVE LEFT IN HIM?
"THERE WE GO. WHAT DID I TELL YOU?
"OKAY, BOYS...
SHRRKKKK

"ORDINARILY, I DON'T LIKE TO INTERRUPT A MAN ENJOYING HIS LUNCH...
BUT THAT AIN'T NO ORDINARY MAN!
THAT CRITTER IS OUR MEAL TICKET!
FIRE THOSE TRANQS!
SPUT
BOZHE MOI!
FFT
FFT
FFT
THMP
SHKKKKKKKKKKKT
ZABEY NA ETO!

THAT'S RIGHT, BOY...
THAT POLAR BEAR WAS THE LEAST OF YOUR WORRIES!
YOU MAY BE THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST CATCH...
BUT YOU'VE BEEN CAUGHT!
OKAY, THAT'S ENOUGH.
HE'S OUT... AND HE IS STILL WORTH MORE TO US ALIVE THAN DEAD.
PEOPLE BEEN LOOKING FOR THIS MUNT FOR YEARS. HE'S GONNA PAY FOR THIS TRIP, THE BOAT AN' PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING ELSE WE CAN DREAM UP BEFORE WE GET BACK TO SHORE!

WOOOHOOOO!
SERIOUSLY, MIKI, YOU ARE A TOTAL SPEED JUNKIE.

TWO MONTHS LATER
FAST, BUT DON'T MAKE ME FURIOUS, FARRELL.
BESIDES, YOU SAID YOU NEEDED TO GET HERE IN A HURRY.
LONG BEACH • 2260
I DID. YOU KNOW, IT'S WEIRD, I THOUGHT WE'D HAVE WAY MORE TROUBLE GETTING THROUGH DOCKLAND SECURITY.
THEY BARELY EVEN LOOKED AT MY PAPERS.
CALL ME JACK.
HAS IT OCCURRED TO YOU THAT THEY WERE DISTRACTED BY YOURS TRULY...?
I MEAN, HELL-OH? DANGEROUS CURVES AHEAD!
AND A COUPLE BEHIND, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.
OF COURSE, MIKI, MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR INDUSTRIES ALWAYS TURN A BLIND EYE WHEN A PRETTY GIRL RIDES BY.
YOU KEEP CLINGING TO THAT.
HUNH...
LOOKS LIKE MY BOAT'S COMING IN, BUT MY TAP IS FREAKING OUT...
LEMME TAKE A QUICK LOOKSEE...

WH-OH.
SH!T SH!T SH!T SH!T SH!T!
MIKI, I'M SORRY, I'M SO, SO SORRY!
WHAT--?
JUST... JUST...
RUN!
SKRKRKRK
KRAK
MIKI! MOVE!
BEANS AND CHEESE! WHAT--?

AND THIS IS YOUR BOAT, FARRELL?
I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU WERE THINKING OF TAKING ME FOR A TRIP ROUND THE HARBOR...
...NOT JUST KNOCKING ME INTO IT!
OKAY, MAYBE I NEED TO PICK MY CLIENTS MORE CAREFULLY, BUT THERE'S A PACKAGE ONBOARD THAT SHIP AND WE'RE HERE TO SECURE IT.
PLACE IS GONNA BE CRAWLING WITH THE PORT AUTHORITIES ANY MINUTE.
WE HAVETA CUT ACROSS THE MOORED SHIP.
AND CALL ME JACK.
HOLD ON, FARRELL, IS THIS LEGIT...
...OR IS THIS SOME KINDA SHADY "PRIVATE DETECTIVE" WORK YOU EXPECT ME NOT TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT?
BE HONEST, YOU WOULDN'T BE WITH ME IN THE FIRST PLACE IF I WAS JUST SOME KIND OF GLORIFIED NOTARY, WOULDJA?
YOU HAVE A POINT.
AND I HAVE BEEN KICKING MY HEELS SINCE HIP AND THE REST OF THE ELEPHANTMEN WERE PUT UNDER HOUSE ARREST.
DO YOU AT LEAST KNOW WHAT'S IN THIS PACKAGE?
I ONLY KNOW IT'S ON THIS SHIP AND I'M SUPPOSED TO GIVE THE CAPTAIN A CODE WORD...
"TUNGUSKA."
THAT'S ASSUMING THE CAPTAIN IS STILL ALIVE.

Uh, FARRELL, WHAT KIND OF CASE HAVE YOU DRAGGED ME INTO?
MIKI, PRIVATE INVESTIGATION ISN'T ALL CRIMES OF PASSION, FEMME FATALES AND LONG LONELY NIGHTS HITTING THE WHISKEY BOTTLE.
SOMETIMES I HAVE TO ANSWER CALLS FROM THE INSURANCE COMPANIES JUST TO KEEP THE LIGHTS ON.
"SECURE OUR ASSETS."
"TAIL OUR BROKER."
"SLEEP WITH MY SISTER."
Y'KNOW, THAT KIND OF THING.
Oh, SH!T, I THINK WE FOUND THE CAPTAIN.
AND CAN YA CALL ME JACK?
CAPTAIN ORYEMA? TUNDÉ?
WHO--?! WHO CALLS MY NAME?
WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?
CREW IS DEAD, MAN. DEAD!
DAMNIT, CAP -- WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
LISTEN... I'M HERE FOR A PACKAGE? I WAS TOLD TO GIVE YOU A PASSWORD...
FARRELL... FORGET IT! THIS MAN NEEDS A DOCTOR...
"TUNGUSKA."
THAT PACKAGE? HAHAHAHA HAHA!
GOOD LUCK OPENING IT UP, MY FRIEND...

"THUNGUSKA" HAS... UH... HE HAS OTHER IDEAS...
FARRELL, WHAT-THE-WHAT?! THIS GUY HAS BEEN GORED...
WE HAVE TO GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!
DON'T PANIC, MIKI... I GOT YOU COVERED.
LET ME JUST SEE IF I CAN LOCATE THE PACKAGE AND I SWEAR, I'LL GET US OFF THIS SHIP IN ONE PIECE.
HRHUNH!
FARRELL.
I THINK MAYBE THAT IS YOUR "PACKAGE."

HELL'S SQUAKKIN' TEETH...
THAT'S A FREAKIN' BIG PACKAGE.
Oh...

I GOT THIS, MIKI.
SMILE, YOU MEAN, MOTHERF--
WHAT? FARRELL, NO...
FTAM
KRTING
ARRGH!!

MIKI, WHAT-THE-WHAT--?
HE'S WOUNDED! HE'S BLEEDING. HE'S BEEN FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE!
WOUNDED ANIMALS ARE THE MOST DANGEROUS. YOU DON'T TAKE CHANCES...
FARRELL, LOOK AT HIM, HE'S NOT AN ANIMAL... HE'S AN ELEPHANTMAN.
AND HE'S BEEN TREATED AS A "PACKAGE."
LOOK...
HEY... WE'RE NOT HERE TO HURT YOU.
AND I DON'T THINK YOU WANT TO HURT ANYONE EITHER...
RIGHT? YOU DON'T WANT TO HURT ANYONE...
STILL WANT TO SHOOT HIM, JACK...?

OKAY, OKAY...
WHAT ARE YOU, MIKI, THE ELEPHANTMEN WHISPERER?
NYET. SHE SIMPLY *HUMAN BEING.*
HAS BEEN LONG TIME I MEET VUN OF ZOSE.
YOUR KOMRAD SAY ELEPHANT*MEN?* THERE ARE OTHERS... LIKE ME?
THAT WOULD MAKE MAMOCHKA HAPPY.
ARE YOU HURT?
DA. I AM STABBED MANY TIME...
MY VOUNDS HEAL VERY FAST. I AM MADE ZIS VAY. BUT SO MANY WOUNDS.
YOU'RE SOME KIND OF TRANSGENIC I HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE.
A MAMMOTH? WHERE DID THEY *FIND* YOU...?

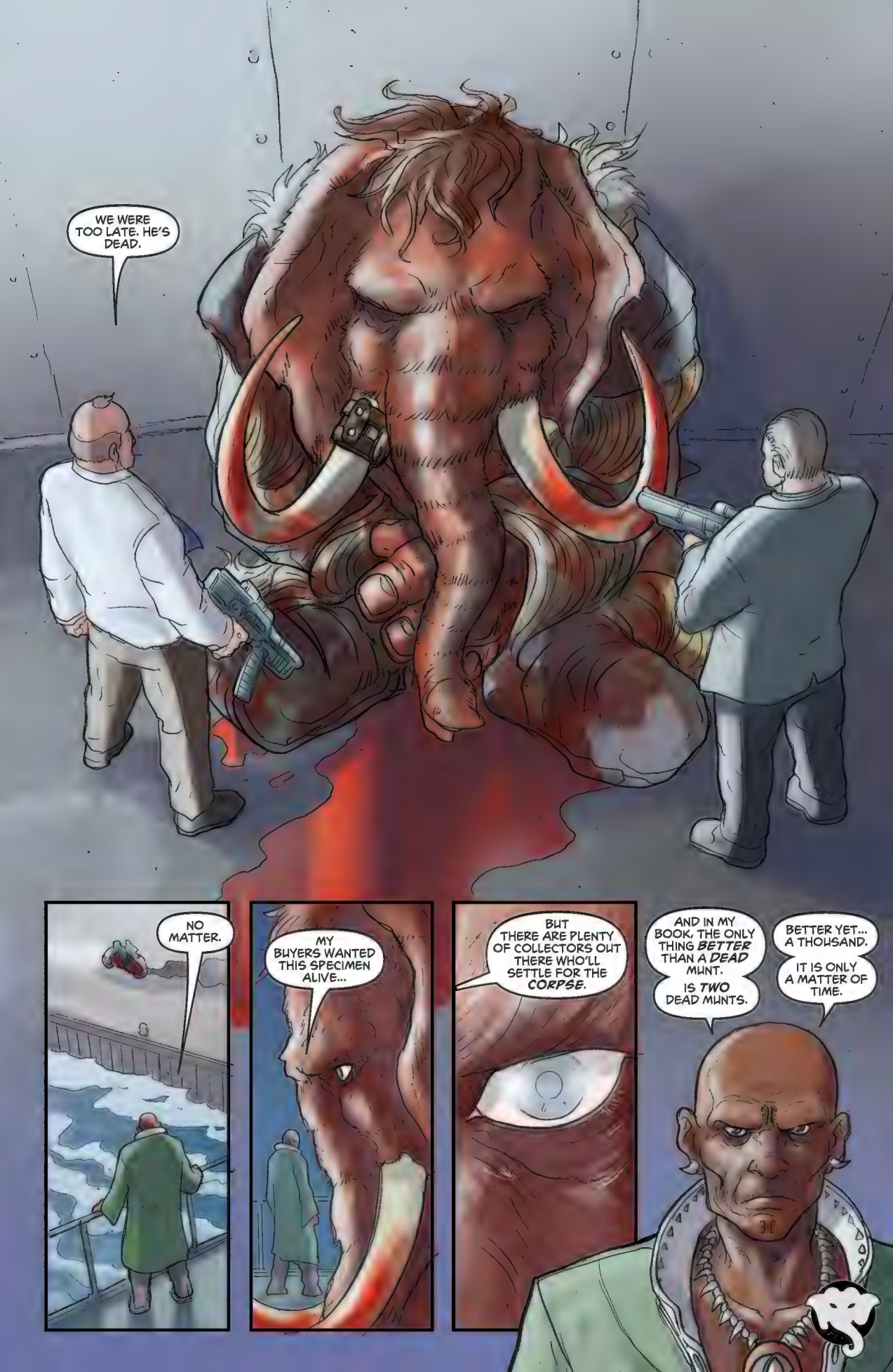
YES... I THINK IS TIME TO TELL MY STORY.
MY MOTHER... WAS SCIENTIST. LIVINK IN EXILE FOR THOUGHT CRIMES.
SHE FOUND DEAD MAMMOTH IN TUNGUSKA...
SHE TOOK SAMPLE OF THE FLESH...
SHE RAISED ME...
LOVED ME...
TAUGHT ME TO SPEAK, MANY LANGUAGES.
TAUGHT ME TO SURVIVE.
BUT WHEN MUCH TIME HAD PASSED...
MEN CAME.

IMPREGNATED HER OWN EGGS WITH DNA...
SHE CARRY ME IN OWN WOMB...
GAVE BIRTH TO ME, BEFORE TIME SO I DID NOT DESTROY HER...
FROM GOVERNMENT.
WANTING HER SECRETS.
WANTING MAKE MORE LIKE ME.
FOR WAR.
"I KILLED MEN.
"BUT THERE WAS... ACCIDENT.
"I WAS ONLY SURVIVOR..."

I FLED. NORTH... KILLED MANY MORE MEN...
SURVIVED ON MY OWN... UNTIL NOW...
MEN FOUND ME.
MEN ALVAYS LOOKINK FOR ME.
TELL ME ABOUT IT...
MIKI, WE HAVE TO GET MEDICS OUT HERE... HE'S LOSING SO MUCH BLOOD...
NYET!
IS ENOUGH NOW...
TUNGUSKA, YOU ARE CUT UP REAL BAD...

NAME IS... DEMETRIOS.
THANK FOR YOU KINDNESS, TOVARISCH...
BUT THIS IS TOO LONG WITH NO MAMOCHKA.
NO MOTHER, NO FAMILY...
NO WOMAN'S LOVE...
THAT...
...IS... NO... LIFE...

MIKI, I THINK IT'S TIME FOR US TO MAKE LIKE A TREE...
I'M STARTING TO THINK I WASN'T ASSIGNED TO RETRIEVE OUR PACKAGE HERE... JUST SLOW HIM DOWN...
WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE HIM TO ROT...
WE HAVE TO, MIKI.
I GOTTA STOP TAKING THESE INSURANCE JOBS...


WE WERE TOO LATE. HE'S DEAD.
NO MATTER.
MY BUYERS WANTED THIS SPECIMEN ALIVE...
BUT THERE ARE PLENTY OF COLLECTORS OUT THERE WHO'LL SETTLE FOR THE CORPSE.
AND IN MY BOOK, THE ONLY THING BETTER THAN A DEAD MUNT. IS TWO DEAD MUNTS.
BETTER YET... A THOUSAND.
IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.

LADRÓN 2006

5

LIFE!

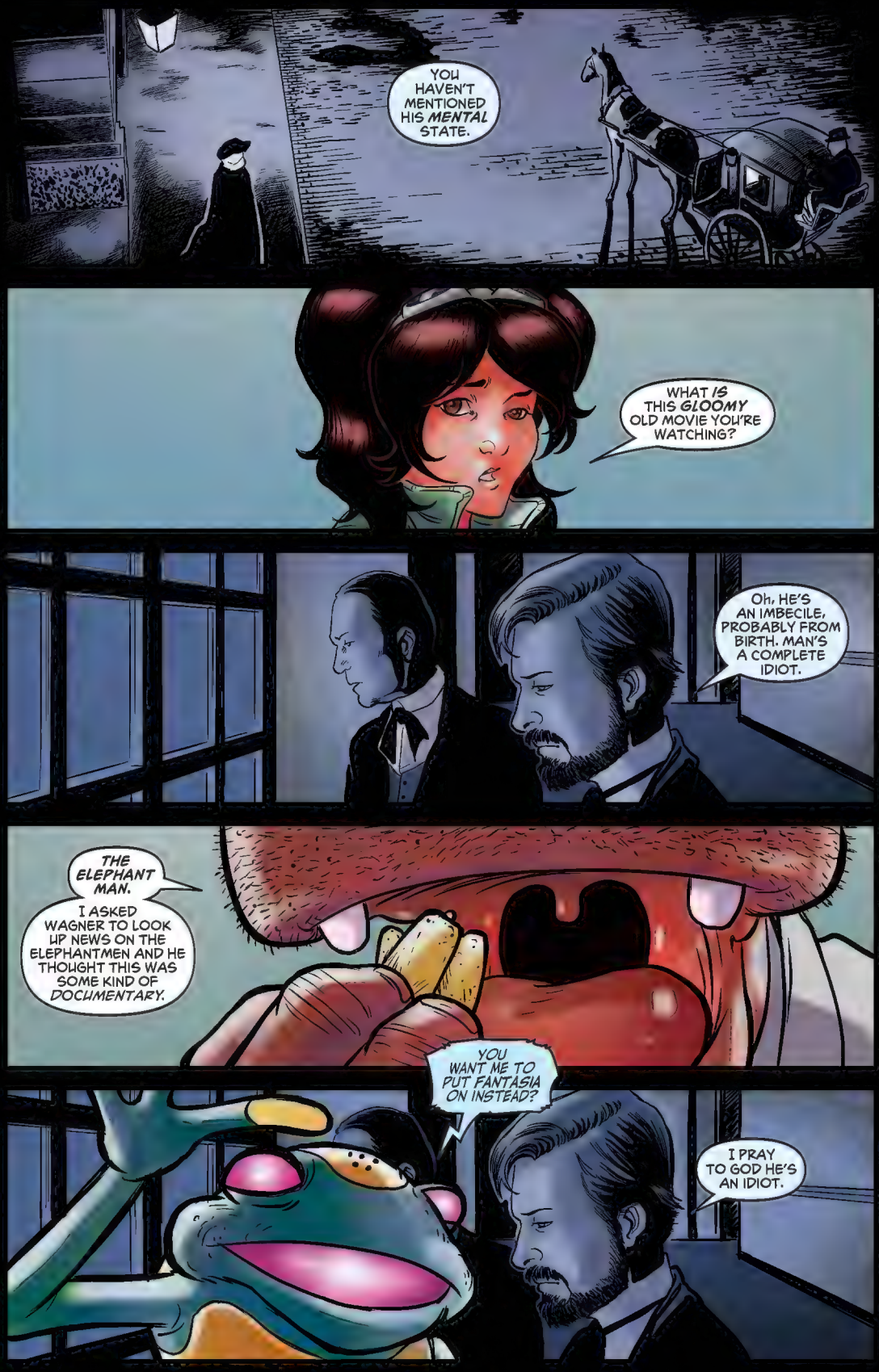
IS FULL OF SURPRISES!

CONSIDER THE FATE OF THIS CREATURE'S POOR MOTHER...
STRUCK DOWN IN THE FOURTH MONTH OF HER MATERNAL CONDITION BY AN ELEPHANT!
A WILD ELEPHANT!
STRUCK DOWN ON AN UNCHARTED AFRICAN ISLE.
THE RESULT IS PLAIN TO SEE...

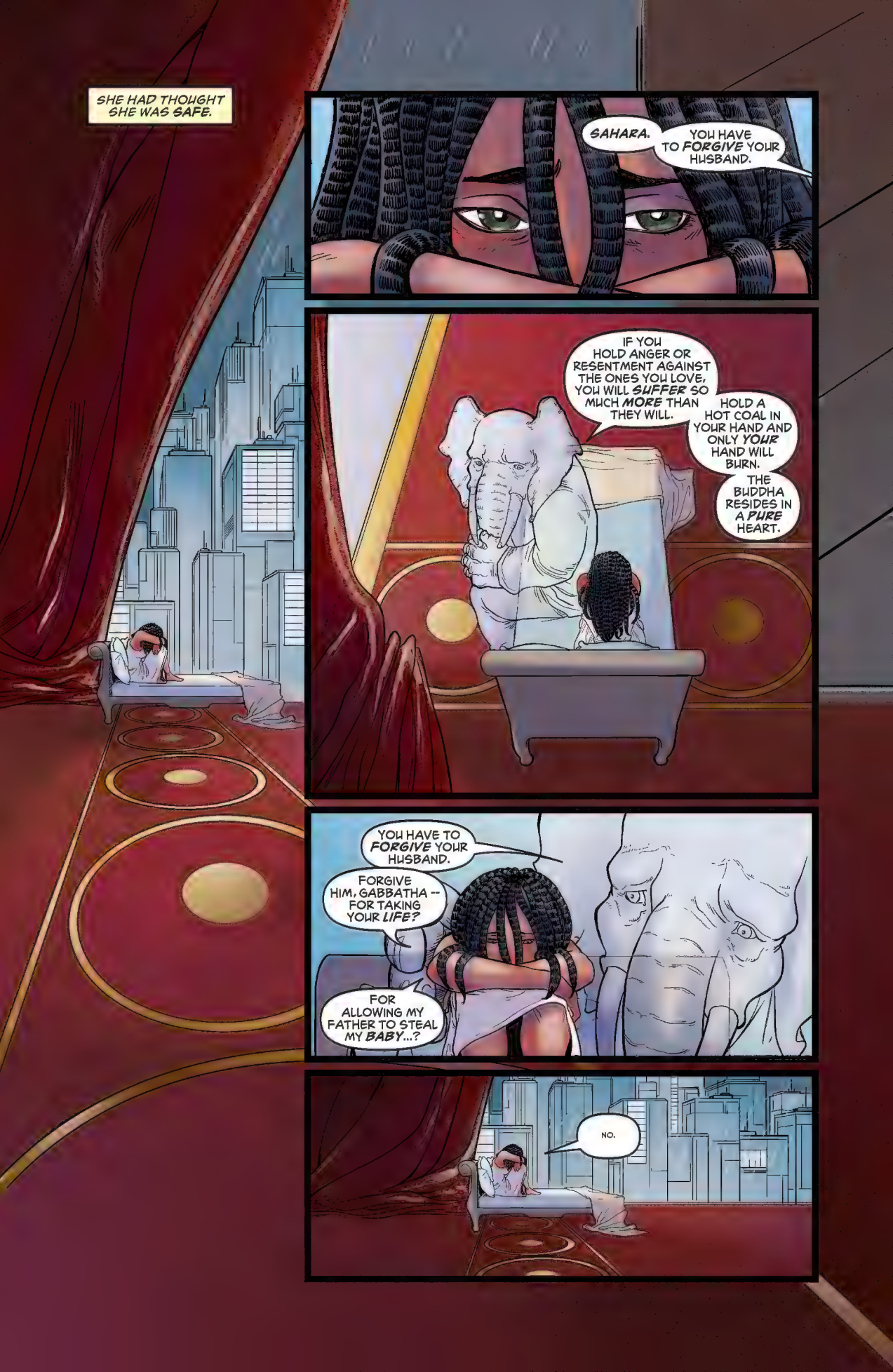
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...
THE TERRIBLE...
ELEPHANTMEN

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN THE WAY YOU ARE NOW?
ARE YOU IN ANY *PAIN?*
ARE YOUR *PARENTS* STILL ALIVE?
DON'T BE *FRIGHTENED*, I SIMPLY WANT TO *LOOK* AT YOU.

HIERONYMOUS ALOYSIUS, ALGERNON, RAZZAMATAZZ FLASK...
HIP FOR SHORT AND NEARLY EIGHT FEET TALL!
LONG TIME, NO SEE!
IT'S LIKE SOMEONE'S KEEPING YOU LOCKED UP, RIGHT?
MIKI, HOW THE HELL ARE YA, SWEETHEART?
BETTER FOR SEEING YOU, YA BIG LUG...
SMEK
BEING UNDER HOUSE ARREST HAS TO SUCK... I FIGURED YOU MIGHT LIKE A TREAT.
AND I KNOW YOU LIKE ROOT VEGETABLES, RIGHT?
AND POTATOES ARE ROOTS, AREN'T THEY?
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE, MIKI... STARCH GOES STRAIGHT TO MY WAIST.
YEAH...? SO WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

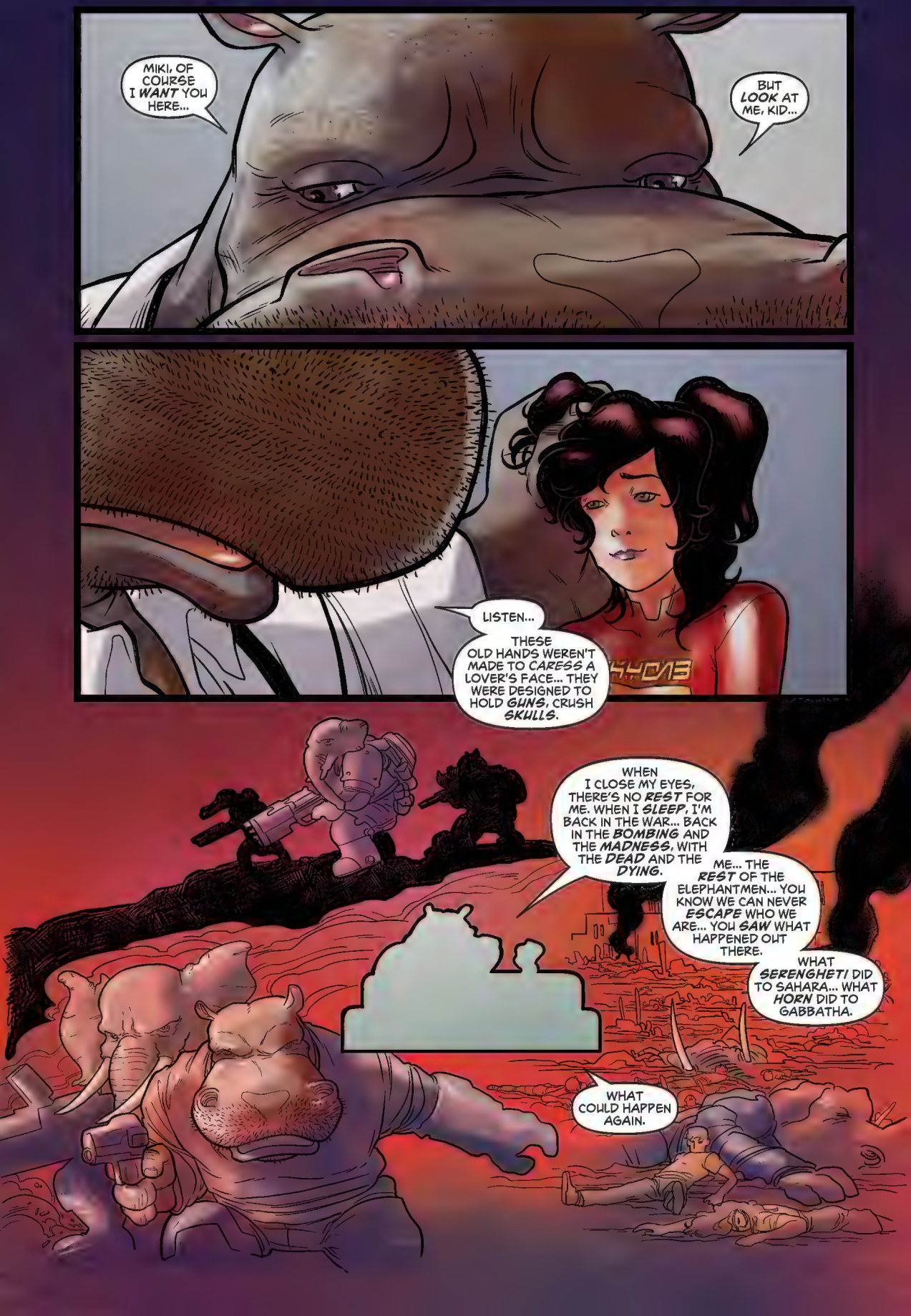

YOU HAVEN'T MENTIONED HIS *MENTAL* STATE.
WHAT *IS* THIS *GLOOMY* OLD MOVIE YOU'RE WATCHING?
Oh, HE'S AN IMBECILE, PROBABLY FROM BIRTH. MAN'S A COMPLETE IDIOT.
THE ELEPHANT MAN.
I ASKED WAGNER TO LOOK UP NEWS ON THE ELEPHANTMEN AND HE THOUGHT THIS WAS SOME KIND OF *DOCUMENTARY.*
YOU WANT ME TO PUT FANTASIA ON INSTEAD?
I PRAY TO GOD HE'S AN IDIOT.

SO WHAT YOU BEEN UP TO...? I MEAN... SINCE THE WEDDING.
SAME OLD SAME OLD, DRIVING RICH FOLK ALL OVER TOWN.
LOTS OF MEXICAN TOURISTS.
AND YOU?
WELL, WATCHING A LOT OF TV. NOT A LOT ELSE YOU CAN DO IF YOU'RE CONFINED TO QUARTERS, YA KNOW.
WHAT DO YOU THINK IS GOING ON AT IVORY TOWERS?
HEY, ARE HORN AND SAHARA EVEN MARRIED NOW?
I MEAN, DID THAT COUNT?

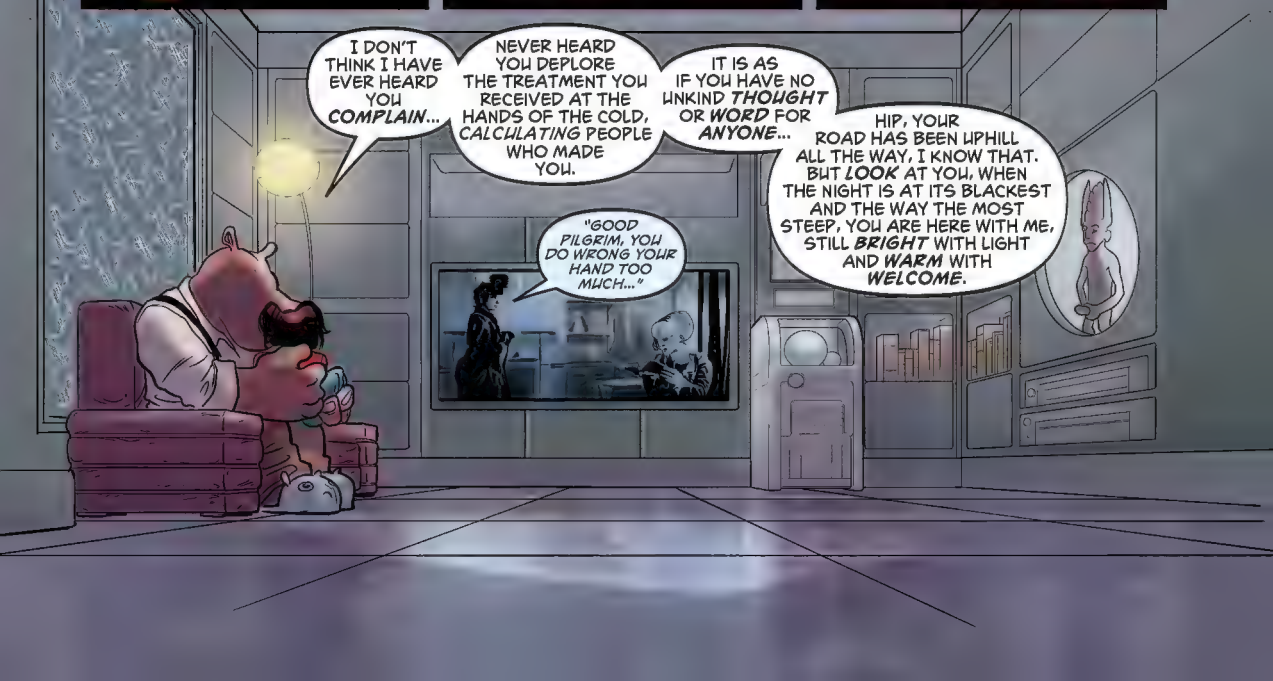

SHE HAD THOUGHT SHE WAS SAFE.
SAHARA.
YOU HAVE TO FORGIVE YOUR HUSBAND.
IF YOU HOLD ANGER OR RESENTMENT AGAINST THE ONES YOU LOVE, YOU WILL SUFFER SO MUCH MORE THAN THEY WILL.
HOLD A HOT COAL IN YOUR HAND AND ONLY YOUR HAND WILL BURN.
THE BUDDHA RESIDES IN A PURE HEART.
YOU HAVE TO FORGIVE YOUR HUSBAND.
FORGIVE HIM, GABBATHA -- FOR TAKING YOUR LIFE?
FOR ALLOWING MY FATHER TO STEAL MY BABY...?
NO.

HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH SAHARA MIGHT NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.
HE HADN'T HELD A GUN IN HIS HAND FOR MANY YEARS.
IT FELT COMFORTABLE THERE.
AND IN A MOMENT OF RAGE AND FRUSTRATION, HE SHOT GABBATHA.
SHOT HIM DEAD.
AND THEN THE HUMILITY OF BEING KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS BY HIP FLASK.
ABANDONED BY HIS WIFE, SAHARA.
ORDERED TO REMAIN IN IVORY TOWERS BY THE INFORMATION AGENCY.
THIS CANNOT STAND.

WOW, THAT'S QUITE THE STORM COMING IN...
NO KIDDING.
WHY, MISTER FLASK, I THINK I'LL HAVE TO STAY ALL NIGHT!
MIKI...
DO YOU THINK THAT'S WISE?
HUNH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN...? IT'S NOT LIKE WE HAVEN'T HAD A SLEEPOVER BEFORE.
YOU DON'T WANT ME TO STAY...?


MIKI, OF COURSE I WANT YOU HERE...
BUT LOOK AT ME, KID...
LISTEN...
THESE OLD HANDS WEREN'T MADE TO CARESS A LOVER'S FACE... THEY WERE DESIGNED TO HOLD GUNS, CRUSH SKULLS.
WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES, THERE'S NO REST FOR ME. WHEN I SLEEP, I'M BACK IN THE WAR... BACK IN THE BOMBING AND THE MADNESS, WITH THE DEAD AND THE DYING.
ME... THE REST OF THE ELEPHANTMEN... YOU KNOW WE CAN NEVER ESCAPE WHO WE ARE... YOU SAW WHAT HAPPENED OUT THERE.
WHAT SERENGHETI DID TO SAHARA... WHAT HORN DID TO GABBATHA.
WHAT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN.

HIP, JUST STOP THAT.
YOU'VE HAD JUST ABOUT A MILLION REASONS TO BECOME SPITEFUL -- FILLED WITH HATRED OF MANKIND...
YOU COULD EASILY HAVE DEGENERATED INTO A MELANCHOLIC DRUNK ON THE VERGE OF A COMPLETE BREAKDOWN, LIKE SO MANY WAR VETERANS DO...
BUT YOU'VE PASSED THROUGH THE FIRE AGAIN AND AGAIN, AND YOU'VE ALWAYS COME OUT UNSCATHED.
YOU'VE REMAINED A GENTLE, AFFECTIONATE AND LOVABLE CREATURE.
YOUR TROUBLES HAVE ALWAYS ENNOBLED YOU.
I KNOW YOU. YOU ACT TOUGH, BUT YOU'RE LIKE A LITTLE KID INSIDE. FREE OF RESENTMENT OR CYNICISM.


I DON'T THINK I HAVE EVER HEARD YOU COMPLAIN...
NEVER HEARD YOU DEPLORE THE TREATMENT YOU RECEIVED AT THE HANDS OF THE COLD, CALCULATING PEOPLE WHO MADE YOU.
IT IS AS IF YOU HAVE NO UNKIND THOUGHT OR WORD FOR ANYONE...
HIP, YOUR ROAD HAS BEEN UPHILL ALL THE WAY, I KNOW THAT. BUT LOOK AT YOU, WHEN THE NIGHT IS AT ITS BLACKEST AND THE WAY THE MOST STEEP, YOU ARE HERE WITH ME, STILL BRIGHT WITH LIGHT AND WARM WITH WELCOME.
"GOOD PILGRIM, YOU DO WRONG YOUR HAND TOO MUCH..."

Ah, MIKI.

YOU DON'T WANT TO FINISH WATCHING THE MOVIE, BOSS?
WHAT WAS IT ALL FOR? WHY DID I DO IT?
AM I A GOOD MAN.
OR AM I A BAD MAN?
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN! DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!

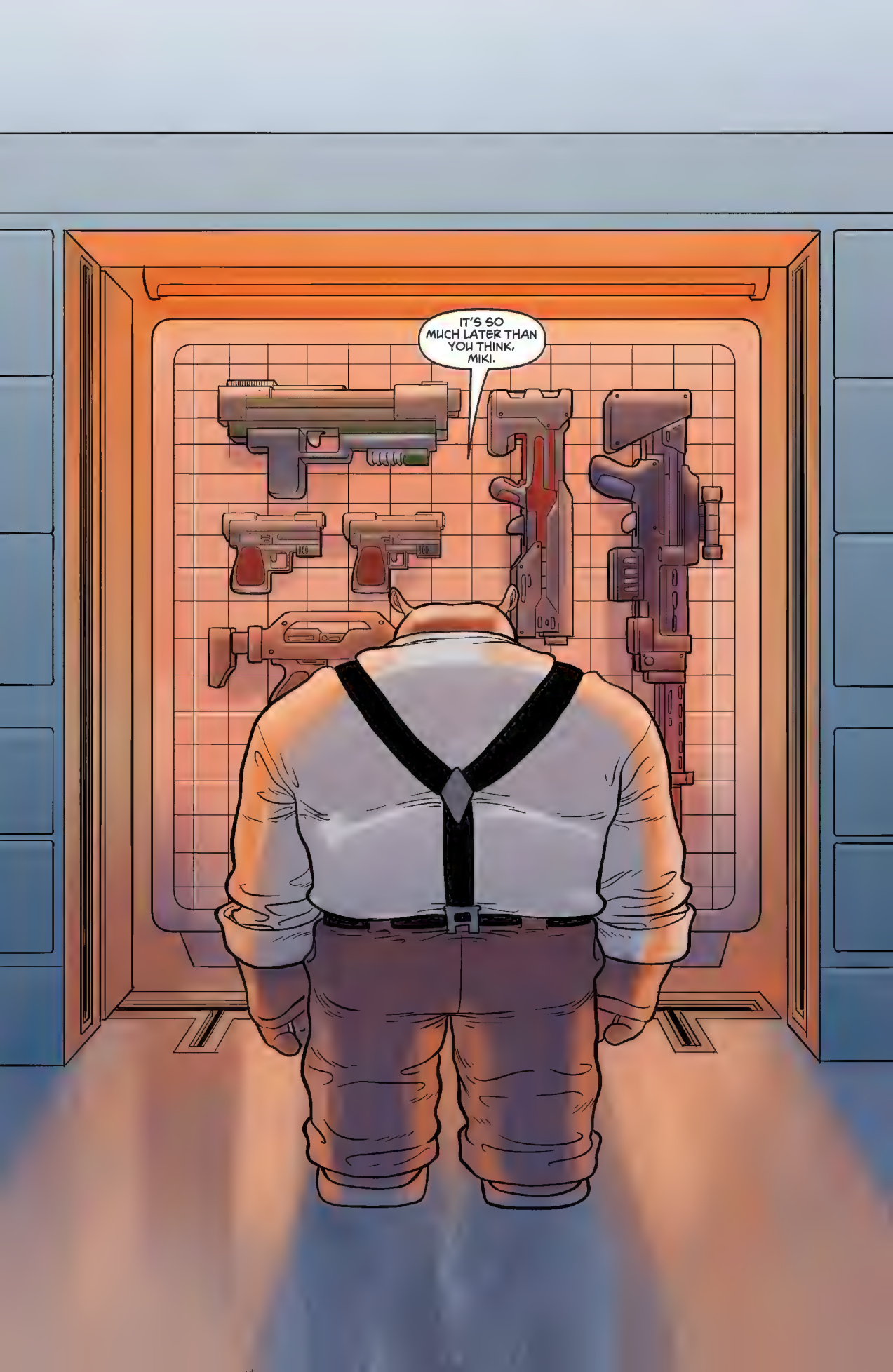
I AM AN ELEPHANTMAN... AND YOU ARE A YOUNG WOMAN WITH HER WHOLE LIFE AHEAD OF HER...
YOU HAVE TO THINK THIS THROUGH.
PEOPLE DIED AT SAHARA'S WEDDING. HUMANS. NOT JUST THE ELEPHANTMEN HER FATHER WAS GUNNING FOR. THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES FOR ALL THE TRANSGENICS.
CRAZY MEN AND WOMEN IN POSITIONS OF POWER HAVE BEEN LONGING FOR ONE OF THE ELEPHANTMEN TO SCREW UP.
HOUSE ARREST IS NOTHING, SWEETHEART. I MIGHT BE INCARCERATED, EXILED...
EXTERMINATED.
NO. THEY WOULDN'T. THEY COULDN'T...
GRUENWALD WON'T ALLOW IT... HELL, I WON'T ALLOW IT!

HIP... I CAME OVER HERE... FARRELL AND I FOUND AN ELEPHANTMAN DOWN IN LONG BEACH...
HE DIED SAD AND ALONE...
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT?
MIKI, WHEN I'M SEVENTY AND YOU'RE FIFTY...
WHEN I DEVELOP WHATEVER KIND OF DEGENERATIVE DISEASE COMES WITH ALL THE NANOTECH THAT'S BEEN IN MY SYSTEM...
WHEN I CAN'T GO TO THE TOILET WITHOUT A NURSE...
WILL YOU STAY BESIDE ME THEN?
OF COURSE...
OF COURSE I WOULD...

HIP, I LOVE YOU.
I LOVE YOU TOO, MIKI...
BUT I NEED YOU TO BE SAFE.
NOT JUST TONIGHT, EVERY NIGHT.
IT'S LATE, YOUR MOTHER WORRIES ABOUT YOU.
IT IS LATE...
HUNH, HOW DID IT GET SO LATE SO SOON?
SEEMS TO ME LIKE IT'S ALWAYS LATE.
OKAY, I'LL LEAVE, BUT THIS ISN'T OVER.
I'LL CALL YOU.
CALL ME IF YOU NEED ANYTHING.
I'M SURE THIS WILL BLOW OVER SOON...

MISTER TREVES, DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
I AM HAPPY EVERY HOUR OF THE DAY.
MY LIFE IS FULL, BECAUSE I KNOW THAT I AM LOVED.
I HAVE GAINED MYSELF.
THAT'S ENOUGH NOW, WAGNER. TURN IT OFF.

ZMMMMM


IT'S SO MUCH LATER THAN YOU THINK, MIKI.

HOW DID IT GET SO LATE SO SOON?

Richard Starkings
Words

Carlos Pedro
Art

Axel Medellin
Color Art

With Respect & Apologies to:
John Merrick, Frederick Treves,
David Lynch, Anthony Hopkins, John Hurt
Freddie Jones, John Standing and Ann Margret

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